

## FACES

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame class to include Houston, Notorious B.I.G.  
Page 14



## MILITARY

Air Force fitness policy will let practice tests count  
Page 3



## MLB

Red Sox fire Cora as sign-stealing scandal fallout continues  
Back page

At debate, Warren makes forceful case for female president » Page 9

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## IMPEACHMENT

# House votes to send 2 articles to Senate

By LISA MASCARO  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House voted Wednesday to send two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate and approve House prosecutors for only the third impeachment trial in American history.

The nearly party-line vote



Pelosi

Trump's impeachment from Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Democratic-run House to the Republican-majority Senate, where the president expects acquittal, even as new evidence is raising fresh questions about his Ukraine dealings.

The vote was 228-193, coming at the start of a presidential election year and one month after the House impeached Trump. The president is charged with abuse of power over his pressure on Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden, using military aid to the country as leverage. Trump was also charged with obstructing Congress' ensuing probe.

"We are here today to cross a very important threshold in American history," Pelosi said, addressing the House before the vote. Earlier, she declared: "This is what an impeachment is about. The president violated his oath of office, undermined our national security, jeopardized the integrity of our elections."

Trump, during an event at the White House, rejected the charges as a "hoax."

SEE TRIAL ON PAGE 8



# Higher calling

Navy SEAL with Harvard medical degree becomes NASA astronaut

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

A former enlisted Navy SEAL, decorated Iraq veteran and Harvard Medical School graduate just added NASA astronaut to his resume.

Navy Reserve Lt. Jonny Kim, 35, who completed astronaut training Jan. 10, said in a telephone interview Wednesday from the Johnson Space Center in Houston that he plans to draw on his battlefield experiences when he goes into space. Kim is now eligible for missions to the International Space Station, the moon and even Mars.

Kim's path to the stars started in South Central Los Angeles, where his father, a South Korean immigrant, ran a liquor store.

In 1992, the family store was attacked and damaged in riots that followed the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers who were videotaped beating black motorist Rodney King after a car chase.

More than 2,200 Korean businesses were looted, destroyed or damaged in the riots, according to research quoted in a 2017 NBC News report.

"It was a very stressful time," Kim recalled.

SEE ASTRONAUT ON PAGE 7

Navy Reserve Lt. Jonny Kim graduated as one of 13 new NASA astronauts this month.

ROBERT MARKOWITZ/NASA

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Disney+ mobile app outpaces streaming rivals

By KELLY GILBLUM  
Bloomberg

Walt Disney Co.'s new streaming service is off to a record-setting start.

Since its release two months ago, the Disney+ mobile app has been downloaded 41 million times across the App Store and Google Play, generating almost \$100 million in user spending, according to a study by SensorTower Inc. That's four times as much as the HBO Now app earned in its first

two months.

Still, the data isn't comprehensive. It excludes many of the devices that viewers use to watch Disney+ — such as Roku, gaming consoles or Amazon Fire TV — meaning it only captures a fraction of the revenue Disney is generating from streaming.

Priced at \$7 a month, Disney+ is a bet that the company can attract as many as 90 million subscribers worldwide in five years.

Disney+ benefited from

launching in several countries, unlike the initial launch of HBO Now. But even just measuring U.S., the app racked up 34.3 million downloads and \$81.5 million. About 85% of downloads have been in the country, with the remainder spread across Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

Netflix Inc. remains the dominant paid streaming platform, with 150 million subscribers globally.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		
Euro costs (Jan. 16)	.....	\$1.1440
Dollar buys (Jan. 16)	.....	10.2741
British pound (Jan. 16)	.....	\$1.33
Japanese yen (Jan. 16)	.....	107.00
South Korean won (Jan. 16)	.....	1,179.00
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	.....	0.3770
British pound	.....	\$1.3031
Canada (Dollar)	.....	1.3056
China (Yuan)	.....	6.8900
Denmark (Krone)	.....	6.7010
Egypt (Pound)	.....	15.2524
Hong Kong (Dollar)	.....	\$1.1151/0.8967
Hungary (Forint)	.....	77.706
Israel (Shekel)	.....	28.51
Japan (Yen)	.....	109.94
Kuwait (Dinar)	.....	0.3034
Norway (Krone)	.....	8.8600
Philippines (Peso)	.....	50.78
Poland (Zloty)	.....	3.79
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	.....	3.7509
Singapore (Dollar)	.....	1.3469
South Korea (Won)	.....	1,157.47
Switzerland (Franc)	.....	0.9651
Thailand (Baht)	.....	30.30
Turkey (New Lira)	.....	5.8794

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

### INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	.....	4.75
Discount rate	.....	2.25
Federal funds market rate	.....	1.55
3-month bill	.....	1.93
30-year bond	.....	2.27

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### THURSDAY IN EUROPE



#### FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

### TODAY

IN STRIPES

- American Roundup ..... 11
- Classified ..... 13
- Comics ..... 15
- Crossword ..... 15
- Faces ..... 14
- Opinion ..... 16
- Sports ..... 17-24

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## PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

Every Friday in the European and Pacific editions  
of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at  
[www.stripes.com/relo](http://www.stripes.com/relo)



## MILITARY

# USAF fitness policy to let practice tests count

By BRIAN FERGUSON  
Stars and Stripes

Airmen soon will have several chances to pass their fitness assessment, a draft Air Force policy stated, days after one of the service's largest commands said it would allow favorable practice tests to count.

The draft policy said that airmen can take up to three diagnostic fitness assessments conducted under official conditions. If they're happy with the scores, they can count them as official.

Airmen taking diagnostic assessments may end them at any point without any of the consequences of failing an official test, the policy said.

A "no fail" fitness test policy was first floated in August by Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth Wright.

Part of the policy appeared on the Air Force amn/nco/sinco Facebook page Tues-

**“Fear of failed physical training tests and the potential of career-ending disciplinary action is a major stressor that we are looking to eliminate ...”**

Lt. Col. Rachel Marazita

AFMC military personnel and programs branch chief

day and was confirmed by the Pentagon as “screen shots of the executive summary, which is still in draft and may change.”

“The goal is to publish it this Spring,” Air Force spokeswoman Capt. Carrie Volpe said in an email.

Diagnostic assessments must be taken at least 15 days prior to the expiration of an airman's current fitness test, the policy stated.

Only after an airman “elects to count the

diagnostic assessment as official” will the results be recorded in the Air Force fitness management system. An Air Reserve Component member must take a diagnostic assessment during Guard or Reserve duty to make it official.

Commanders and supervisors can't require a diagnostic test to count, nor can they prevent airmen from taking such tests under official conditions, the draft policy stated. Command-directed assess-

ments will not count toward the three-attempt limit.

The policy details come days after Air Force Materiel Command, which includes about 80,000 combined military and civilian personnel, said they would beta-test a similar program beginning Monday.

The practice tests aim to motivate airmen to maintain their fitness while reducing the pressure of potential failure, Lt. Col. Rachel Marazita, AFMC military personnel and programs branch chief, said Friday on the command's website.

“Fear of failed physical training tests and the potential of career-ending disciplinary action is a major stressor that we are looking to eliminate through a sound testing protocol coupled with an organizational culture of fitness,” Marazita said.

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## USS America trains with Japan for first time since arriving

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ  
Stars and Stripes

Still a relative newcomer to its homeport in Japan, the amphibious assault ship USS America joined up in the East China Sea with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force for training exercises Monday, according to the U.S. Navy.

The 844-foot America, homeported at Sasebo Naval Base, and the amphibious transport dock ship JS Kunisaki, homeported at Kure Naval Base in Hiroshima, exchanged personnel, maneuvered together and held communication drills and flight demonstrations, according to a Navy news release. The day-long exercise was the first for the America, the flagship of an expeditionary strike group, since it arrived Dec. 6 at Sasebo.

“We are extremely pleased with this first opportunity for USS America to operate side-by-side with our JMSDF allies,” Rear Adm. Fred Kacher, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 7, said in a Navy statement. “This exercise allows us to build on our already strong relationship and helps to underscore our commitment to this incredibly important partnership and region.”

The western Pacific has become an arena for global compe-

tition as China seeks to control the seas that border its shores. The U.S. has partnered with its regional allies in similar exercises to demonstrate their resolve to resist Chinese expansion.

The East China Sea, encompassed by China, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea, is one setting for those demonstrations. Japan and China, for example, have competing claims to a barren group of small islands, the Senkakus, called the Diaoyu by China, that lie over potential gas and oil deposits.

During the exercise, JMSDF Rear Adm. Shirane Tsutomu, commander of the Mine Warfare Force, came aboard the America to meet the strike group leaders and acquaint himself with the ship's capabilities, according to the Navy.

“There is no better partner than the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. Our sailors and Marines enjoyed the opportunity to work with this first-rate team of professionals,” Capt. Luke Frost, USS America's commanding officer, said in the statement. “We are proud to be part of Forward Deployed Naval Forces and inherit the legacy of this critical alliance for the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.”

During Tsutomu's visit, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 demonstrated its F-35B Lightning II fighter, a stealthy aircraft capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings.

The America's new design expands the Navy's aviation capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region. Commissioned in 2014, the warship comes with a larger hangar bay instead of a well deck, which means it's able to maximize the capabilities of the F-35B stealth fighter. With its near 1,000 core crew and ability to embark 1,700



VANCE HAND/U.S. Navy

**Capt. Luke Frost, right, commander of USS America, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Rear Adm. Shirane Tsutomu, commander, JMSDF Mine Warfare Force, watch flight operations on Monday. USS America trained with Japanese forces for the first time since arriving.**



VINCENT E. ZLINE/U.S. Navy

**The amphibious assault ship USS America and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force amphibious transport dock ship JS Kunisaki operated together in the East China Sea on Monday.**

Marines, the America also has 30% more storage space, allowing the ship to carry 250% more aviation fuel than the traditional flat-deck ship.

Aside from the F-35Bs and the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, the ship also carries several helicopters: AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters, a CH-53K Super Stallion and the MH-60S Knighthawk.

A sister ship to the America, the future USS Tripoli, is expected to come into service in May as the Navy's second helicopter assault platform. Its original commissioning date in 2019 was delayed by shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls Industries.

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## Scrapping Pentagon F-35 office an option to cut costs

By TONY CAPACCI  
Bloomberg

House lawmakers trying to reduce the projected \$1.1 trillion cost of maintaining the F-35 over 60 years are considering options including eliminating the Pentagon's central office in charge of the fighter jet built by Lockheed Martin.

Dispersing responsibility to the three military services that are getting variations of the plane is among possibilities drafted by the Defense Department that was to be reviewed in a closed-door briefing of two House Armed Services subcommittees.

The proposal to “potentially dissolve and disaggregate the F-35 Joint Program Office” is aimed at gains in “efficiency and effectiveness,” Monica Matoush, a spokeswoman for the Armed Services Committee, said in an email.

Other possibilities include prodding Lockheed Martin to give up data rights on some spare parts — so that other suppliers could be sought — and pushing for improvements in the aircraft's flawed diagnostic system.

Matoush said the briefing, which will include Under Secretary of Defense Ellen Lord and representatives of the Government Accountability Office, will also “evaluate the merits and disadvantages” of an unsolicited proposal by Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed to enter into a long-term, “performance-based” logistics contract for F-35 sustainment.

Lord said Tuesday at a meeting with defense reporters that she's still undecided on the proposal's merits. The Navy is taking the lead in gathering the data needed to thoroughly assess the plan and an official assigned to review it will present his findings Friday, Lord said.

### Correction

A Jan. 15 article on challenges facing the U.S. in Afghanistan incorrectly stated the number of American service members who died in Afghanistan in 2019. A five-year high of 18 troops died in combat.



## MILITARY

# Border funding plan faces dual criticism

By PAUL SONNE, JEFF STEIN  
AND NICK MIROFF  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers from both major parties criticized White House plans to take an additional \$7.2 billion this year from Pentagon funds to pay for President Donald Trump's border wall project, as more congressionally approved renovation and construction plans for U.S. military installations threaten losing their funding.

For the second year in a row, the White House is planning to obtain the majority of the funding it wants for Trump's barrier project by defunding construction and maintenance projects on military bases at home and abroad and taking money from elsewhere in the Pentagon's budget by funneling it through the counternarcotics program.

Senior Republicans grumbled about the plan but mostly put the blame on Democrats, who agreed to provide \$1.4 billion in border barrier funding this year — far less than the \$5 billion Trump requested.

"I wish they'd get the money somewhere else instead of defense," said Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., chairman of the Senate

Appropriations Committee. "But I do support building the wall."

The White House shifted \$2.5 billion using counternarcotics authorities last year, but this year, Trump plans to boost that to \$3.5 billion. Trump administration officials also are planning to take \$3.7 billion in military construction funding, slightly more than the \$3.6 billion diverted in 2019.

"I think it's outrageous," said Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., the top Democrat on the armed services committee, who called it "a slap to the military as well as a slap to Congress" and "another example of Congress sitting down and trying to direct resources that are of critical need to the Department of Defense, and then having those needs disregarded by the president for a project that is more political than necessary for national security."

The additional funds would give the administration the money to build about 885 miles of new barriers by 2022, significantly more than the 509 miles the administration had set as a target for the end of Trump's first term.

Despite launching his run for the presidency on a promise to make Mexico pay for the cost of a "border wall," Trump has struggled to convince lawmakers

that the project is necessary and useful. If his administration diverts \$7.2 billion again this year, it will bring to \$18.4 billion the total amount of funds budgeted for Trump's wall.

Most of that money — \$13.3 billion — would come from Department of Defense money appropriated by Congress for other purposes.

"I'm not in favor of diversions of budgets that were appropriated for specific purposes, and I'd rather see specific appropriations for the wall," Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said on Tuesday.

Trump administration officials have repeatedly tried to play down the potential impact of the funding maneuver on military assets and operations, depicting the move as an act of creative accounting.

The \$3.6 billion the White House shifted from 2019 military construction projects would be "deferred," Pentagon officials said last year, and would proceed, in some cases without delay, once Congress "backfilled" the diverted funds in the 2020 budget.

Lt. Col. Chris Mitchell, a spokesman for the Pentagon, said the Defense Department had nothing new to announce regarding this year's plans.

Reed said he had not spoken to GOP senators yet, but he added that "this can't continue."

Congress approved \$738 billion for the national defense budget this year, up from \$716 billion last year.

"We can't sit there and listen to the Department of Defense say we have critical needs for the troops, quality of life for their training and their readiness and then have that thrown all overboard," Reed said. "How can you come up to us and say, 'We desperately need these projects — this is critical, it's critical to the quality of life of the troops — and then say, 'No, not really.'"

The president has promised to finish more than four times that by the end of this year, but Homeland Security officials have tried to fudge that target, saying in recent days that the total will include completed barriers and sections "under construction."

Nearly all of the new barriers the government has built so far are along sections of the border already under federal control, where crews have replaced smaller, older barriers with steel bars set in concrete that extend 30 feet into the air.

## Black Hawks to start NM border flights

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Black Hawk helicopters will start flights over a stretch of the U.S.-Mexico border, including New Mexico and Texas, for border enforcement and search and rescue operations, federal border agency officials said.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations confirmed that the U.S. Army is transferring three Black Hawk helicopters to the El Paso Air Branch to replace the older helicopters being retired and sold, The Albuquerque Journal reported Monday.

The Black Hawk can fly faster, remain in the air longer and carry more people, systems and cargo in a region home to more than 2.5 million people, El Paso Air Branch officials said.

Some organizations have opposed the addition, saying it allows the militarization of the Border Patrol.

The first helicopter was delivered in November, the second one is expected to arrive in the spring and the third one is scheduled for next year, officials said.

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THE NEW SANNO

# PACIFIC

## US, S. Korea resume defense cost-sharing talks

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

U.S. and South Korea resumed defense cost-sharing talks this week after the State Department signaled it was lowering its demand in a bid to reach a retroactive agreement after the current contract expired at the end of the year.

The disagreement is a major irritant in relations between the longtime allies as they face a growing threat from North Korea amid stalled nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington.

The United States has demanded that South Korea significantly increase its contribution for stationing some 28,500 American troops on the divided peninsula. But lead State Department negotiator James DeHart said last month that Washington was not focused on its initial \$5 billion demand.

That sum, which would be a nearly five-fold increase from the previous year, and the reported wish of President Donald Trump's administration to expand the scope of the Special Measures Agreement beyond troop funding, have been key sticking points in three previous rounds of failed talks.

South Korea's chief negotiator said the two sides were closer but still had work to do as he arrived in Washington, D.C., for the two-day talks, which began Tuesday.

"We're in the process of narrowing our differences on various issues, but it's also true that we continue to be apart on how to reach a comprehensive deal," Jeong Eun



South Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**South Korean negotiators, left, meet with their U.S. counterparts for a sixth round of defense cost-sharing talks Tuesday in Washington.**

Bo said.

"Both sides are trying very hard to come up with a creative solution," he was quoted as saying by the Yonhap News Agency. "Our negotiations don't deal with just one issue, so we are working to find a compromise."

Here's a look at what's at stake:

### What is the agreement?

South Korea has helped pay for non-personnel costs for U.S. troops under the agreement since 1991, with most of the funds used for nearly 9,000 South Korean employees who provide food, administrative and logistical support, as well as con-

struction costs. Previous contracts have lasted for five years, but the two sides agreed to a retroactive, one-year stopgap measure increasing South Korea's contribution by 8.2% to about \$870 million for 2019 after failing to meet the end-of-year deadline.

### What's the problem?

The U.S. has demanded that South Korea pay nearly \$5 billion per year and wants to add new categories to the agreement, such as the cost of rotational troop deployments. This is in line with Trump's "America First" policies toward alliances. Seoul has indicated it's willing to pay more but in-

sists the two sides should negotiate within the parameters of the current agreement.

South Korea has balked at a fivefold increase, and Jeong said last month that Seoul won't pay for maintaining American troops stationed outside the country. South Korea also says its indirect support for the alliance should be considered, including the fact that the American bases are rent-free. South Korea also sent troops to fight in Iraq after the 2003 invasion. And Washington is pressing Seoul to deploy troops to the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions with Iran. The final agreement must be ratified by the South Korean National Assembly, raising political pressure on President Moon Jae-in's government to reach a better deal.

### Will troops have to leave?

Both sides have said that the possibility of withdrawing American troops is not part of the equation, although Trump has said in the past that he would like to bring them home. The South Korean funds are used for non-personnel costs, so the lack of a contract doesn't affect troop salaries. South Korean employees, however, have been warned that furloughs may be necessary if an agreement isn't reached by April. The dispute also has triggered small anti-American protests, although polls show that public support for the alliance remains strong.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.  
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## MILITARY

# Former Green Beret pleads guilty in conspiracy case

By JONATHAN DREW  
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A former U.S. Army Green Beret pleaded guilty to his role in a conspiracy while deployed to Afghanistan to steal about \$200,000 from government funds meant for purposes ranging from humanitarian efforts to base construction, prosecutors said.

The Raleigh-based U.S. attorney's office said in a news release that William Todd Chamberlain, 46, pleaded guilty Monday to conspiracy and receiving stolen government property. When he's sentenced at a later date, he'll face as many as 15 years in prison, though others in the case received probation.

Prosecutors said Chamberlain and four other members of the 3rd Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg, N.C., stole about \$200,000 while deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010. The news release said the five soldiers had access to separate government funds meant to purchase operational items not available through normal supply systems, to pay for humanitarian purposes such as building roads or to fund counterterrorism efforts.

"Our office stands committed to routing out public corruption. Chamberlain and his teammates abused the unique trust bestowed upon them by the military as members of the Special Forces," U.S. Attorney Robert J. Higdon said in a statement.

The indictment said that the soldiers converted some of the cash into money orders, sent it to family in the mail or brought it with them to the U.S. at the end of their deployment. They often withdrew a few hundred dollars at a time, according to court documents. For example, prosecutors wrote that Chamberlain used federal funds to purchase two money orders for \$900 apiece and deposit those money orders in a bank account in November 2009.

Prosecutors said in court documents that the soldiers fabricated financial records to cover up the missing money.

"Knowing that they would be accountable for all of the federal monies spent in connection with operational and reconstruction efforts, the co-conspirators falsified receipts to conceal the amount of monies stolen," prosecutors wrote.

When confronted about the money by authorities, the soldiers lied about where it came from, according to prosecutors.

"They either claimed falsely winning the cash gambling or bringing the cash with them from the United States when deployed," the news release said.

The four other soldiers involved in the case pleaded guilty in 2014. Each was sentenced to three years' probation. Chamberlain's case was prolonged when he filed motions, ultimately dismissed by a federal judge, arguing he needed to access classified information to help his defense, according to the news release.

Prosecutors said Chamberlain was a sergeant first class and the engineer for the team. Prosecutors said three of his teammates were prepared to testify "that they handed him large sums of U.S. currency and saw him at the post office purchasing postal money orders."

Authorities said the crime was especially serious because it took place during a deployment to a war zone.

"Theft of U.S. government funds in a war zone is a serious crime that weakens our national objectives in Afghanistan," John F. Sopko, special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, said in a statement.

An attorney for Chamberlain didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday.



Trevor Reilly

**Marine Pfc. Ali Al-kazagh, shown here in 2017, was sentenced Tuesday to three years in prison for attempting to bring illegal weapons onto an Air Force base in Nebraska.**

## Marine sentenced for trying to bring illegal firearms onto base

By WYATT OLSON  
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII — A Marine Corps private arrested in May after attempting to bring illegal firearms onto an Air Force base in Nebraska was sentenced to three years in prison under a plea agreement finalized Tuesday in Hawaii.

Pfc. Ali Al-kazagh, stationed at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, was arrested May 31 after being stopped by gate guards at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha.

Al-kazagh pleaded guilty to possessing unlawful firearms modifications in the form of devices designed to make a semi-automatic weapon function like a machine gun. Security personnel searching his car found a bump stock for a rifle and another similar device, dubbed a "switch" used to render semi-automatic Glock pistols into fully automatic weapons.

Prosecutors on Tuesday described another item found as a "probable" silencer, although the defense objected that it was a purely cosmetic device that did not suppress the sound of gunfire.

Al-kazagh also pleaded guilty to making false official statements to his sergeant in Hawaii and the gate guard at Offutt, along with fraudulent enlistment, in which he did not disclose to the recruiter he had once been arrested and rejected from enlistment into another service.

Under the agreement, the charges of carrying a concealed weapon, communicating threats, unauthorized absence, violation of a lawful general regulation and dereliction of duty were dropped.

Al-kazagh, a native of Nebraska and the son of Iraqi refugees, was home on leave at the time of the arrest.

In a pre-sentencing statement Tuesday, Al-kazagh said he was going into Offutt AFB to first work out at the gym and then to meet a woman on base he had chatted with online. He said he lied to the guard about not having guns because he wanted to avoid any hassle.

The Omaha World-Herald newspaper reported soon after the arrest that gate guards had stopped

Al-kazagh for questioning because his name appeared on a law enforcement watchlist.

His name was on a "be on the lookout" bulletin because the private had allegedly told another Marine he would "shoot up the battalion, starting at the barracks" if he received discipline for missing a training exercise, he said. He also mentioned specific Marines as targets, the newspaper said.

The topic of threats was not brought up during the lengthy Tuesday hearing.

Barely audible and holding back tears, Al-kazagh apologized prior to sentencing.

"I made mistakes that I wish I could take back," he said. "I hope my family, friends and fellow Marines will be able to forgive me."

Al-kazagh's attorneys introduced a half-dozen character witnesses before sentencing, each testifying via telephone from Nebraska, including his sister, foster-care mother and a high school buddy.

Nedhal Al-kazahy, his younger sister, described her brother as protective of her and almost always upbeat — despite the tumult of them and four other siblings being put into foster care when the state declared their parents unfit to care for them.

Defense attorney Capt. James Larkin told the court that Al-kazagh had been placed in more than 30 foster homes while growing up, where at times he was "beaten" and "neglected."

Larkin argued for a lighter, 24-month sentence on the 36 months prosecutors had proposed before Capt. Ann Minami, the judge hearing the case.

Longtime friend Trevor Reilly told the court that Al-kazagh had struggled somewhat after being stationed at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in August 2018. Al-kazagh called him at one point feeling distraught that someone had thrown raw bacon on his bunk in the apparent belief that he was a Muslim.

Reilly said that while that episode "broke him down," Al-kazagh revealed no "hint of retaliation."

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## Marines' sergeant major talks readiness, lethality in Okinawa

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Troy Black is in Okinawa this week to host the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Force Level Summit, which brings together sergeant majors from three- and four-star commands across the service to discuss readiness and the Corps' ability to inflict lethal force, Marine officials said.

Black chose Okinawa as the site for the quarterly conference — usually held in Washington — because of the importance placed on the Indo-Pacific region by Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger's Planning Guidance and the National Defense Strategy.

Black said the Corps remains focused on developing a force to meet "peer" threats in and around the region.

Being able to bring these senior leaders from across the Marine Corps to here and have this conference, sort of gives them the opportunity to kind of feel what really is going on here close to the threat," Black said. "That's why we're here right now."

The Indo-Pacific remains a focus for the U.S. military, Black



DOMINIQUE OSTHOFF/U.S. Marine Corps

**Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Troy Black, seen at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., on Jan. 8, is in Okinawa this week hosting the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Force Level Summit.**

said.

Discussions thus far have revolved around dissecting higher retention rates in Okinawa and around III Marine Expeditionary Force and how these factors can be applied across the Corps.

"In a younger group of individuals that's because we're actually doing something," Black said. "We're not just sitting back, going to training yet again. We're actually engaged."

Black said expanding educational opportunities will also help the service retain its enlisted Marines.

The III Marine Expeditionary Force is the only permanently deployed MEF in the Marine Corps.

Black said findings this week will inform future summits dealing with health, wellness and fitness, recruiting and retention and military education.

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# MILITARY

## Russia, China would fill gap of US pullout from Africa

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

A group of bipartisan lawmakers has cautioned the Pentagon against large troop reductions in Africa, arguing that Russia and China would fill the vacuum that would be created by a smaller U.S. presence on the continent.

Ten lawmakers from the Democratic and Republican parties argued in a letter sent Tuesday to Defense Secretary Mark Esper that scaling back U.S. troop numbers also would undermine counterterrorism operations at a time when Islamic militants are gaining ground in parts of Africa.

"The execution of stability operations in Africa and meeting China and Russia in great power competition are not mutually exclusive," the lawmakers wrote.

The Pentagon is reviewing the U.S. Africa Command mission and force levels on the continent. There are roughly 6,000 military personnel in Africa at any given time, but the military is considering redeploying some of those troops to missions in other places, such as the Pacific.

In their letter, the lawmakers



DANIEL HERNANDEZ/U.S. Air Force

**Massachusetts National Guard soldiers train soldiers with the Rapid Intervention Battalion, a Djiboutian army elite military force, in close quarters battle tactics near Djibouti City, Djibouti, last year.**

requested immediate notification if any decision is made to significantly alter the force posture in Africa. Great power competition is playing out not only in the Pacific or Middle East, but also in Africa, they argued.

"China and Russia have made aggressive, targeted investments in African countries as both powers look to expand their influence in the region," the lawmakers

said in a statement.

China has invested heavily in Africa for more than a decade and is now the continent's largest trading partner and lender. In addition to pouring billions of dollars into massive infrastructure projects, China opened its first overseas base in Djibouti in 2017, neighboring the U.S.' Camp Lemonnier in the Horn of Africa country.

In recent years, Russia has sought to reestablish the influence it had in Africa during the Soviet era. Last year, a dozen African leaders attended the first Russia-Africa summit in Moscow, described in the Guardian newspaper as a multimillion dollar effort "to charm African leaders with the prospect of arms deals, and investments in mining, nuclear energy and other spheres."

Over the past five years, Moscow has signed more than 20 bilateral military cooperation agreements with African states, the lawmakers said.

"Rather than retreat from African affairs, it is in the interest of the United States to continue to share democratic values and military expertise with developing nations across the continent," their letter stated.

A large U.S. pullout could leave a vacuum in Africa that would be filled by competitors, according to the lawmakers, who cited Syria as an example of what happens when the U.S. steps aside.

"Within weeks of the United States abandoning a military base near Aleppo, Russian forces assumed full control of the facility and began conducting operations from the American-built infrastructure. Reports on the ongoing force posture deliberations (for Africa) indicate the potential to repeat this mistake by abandoning bases and other assets," the lawmakers wrote.

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## Astronaut: Kim hopes to honor fallen Navy teammates through work as NASA astronaut

FROM FRONT PAGE

He learned about the SEALs while he was still a student at Santa Monica High School and about training his mind and body in the hopes of earning a Trident, he said. He enlisted in the Navy in 2002 and, after a grueling qualification course, joined SEAL Team 3, but even tougher tests were waiting when he deployed to Iraq.

The SEALs fought out of Camp Ramadi in 2006 and in Baghdad and Sadr City in 2008, he said.

"We had heavy, sustained combat for both deployments," he recalled.

Members of his unit who fell in battle included Petty Officer 2nd Class Marc Alan Lee, who was killed in action during a firefight with insurgents, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Monsor, who was awarded the Medal of Honor after falling on a grenade to save two teammates in Ramadi.

Another teammate, Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Job, died after leaving the Navy as a result of wounds sustained in combat, Kim said.

"They were phenomenal human beings," he said of his fallen comrades. "I promised to live a life of service to make up for the people they were leaving behind."

Kim, whose awards include a Silver Star and a Bronze Star with "V" device, was impressed by the work of battlefield surgeons that he observed in Iraq, he said.

"I wanted to become a doctor and return to the battlefield to save lives," he said.

After coming home from his second deployment with more than 100 combat operations under his belt, Kim was accepted for commissioning and earned a bachelor's degree in math from the University of San Diego before heading off to Harvard in 2012 and graduating in 2016.

He was selected along with 11 others out of 18,000 applicants for his NASA class.

"So we were all thrilled when he was selected, but not really all that surprised," David Brown, head of Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Emergency Medicine, told the Harvard Gazette in 2017. Kim was a resident there before being selected by NASA.

"He's just a remarkable young man," Brown said, "incredibly committed, absolutely unfraid." Contrary to some media reports, Kim is not the first Korean American astronaut, he said, noting the Korean ancestry of Mark L. Polansky, a former Air Force F-15 Eagle and A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot who flew on three space shuttle missions between 2001 and 2009.

Now married with young children, Kim is also keen to set an example for the next generation.

"NASA inspires kids like me who aren't the most confident in their ability to dream," he said.

Kim feels that his SEAL training has prepared him well for work in space, he said.

"We have this creed," he said. "We never leave anyone behind. We never give up. Our bond to our brothers and sisters can never

break."

The prospect of launching from U.S. soil in one of several new spacecraft is exciting, he said.

"It's a great time to be an astronaut," he said.

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ROBERT MARKOWITZ/NASA

**The 2017 NASA astronaut class includes from left, Zena Cardman, Jasmin Moghbeli, Jonny Kim, Frank Rubio, Matthew Dominick, Warren Hoburg, Robb Kulin, Kayla Barron, Bob Hines, Raji Chari, Loral O'Hara and Jessica Watkins.**

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## NATION



Evan Vucce/AP

Supporters of President Donald Trump cheer as he arrives for a campaign rally at UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena on Tuesday in Milwaukee. In his speech, Trump defended his decision to order the strike that killed Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, whom he labeled the “world’s No. 1 terrorist.”

## Trump uses rally to defend Iran policy as Dems decry it

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — As President Donald Trump rallied supporters Tuesday night by defending his decision to kill a top Iranian general, the Democrats vying to replace him used their final debate before primary voting begins to argue that doing so made the country less safe.

With Trump firing up thousands in the battleground state of Wisconsin and the Democratic candidates squaring off in Iowa ahead of its Feb. 3 caucuses, the political events were expected to offer very different visions for the country’s future. But the contrast on Iran in nearly real time was especially stark.

Trump spent much of his speech defending his decision to order the strike that killed top Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, whom he labeled the “world’s No. 1 terrorist.” That move came under intense criticism from Democrats who said the president should have consulted Congress and raised questions about whether it really prevented an imminent attack, as some Trump administration officials have claimed.

“The Democrats are outraged that we killed this terrorist monster, even though this monster was behind hundreds and hundreds of deaths,” Trump told the crowd in downtown Milwaukee — not far

from where Democrats will hold their convention this summer. He added that Soleimani was “the king of the roadside bomb. Great percentages of people don’t have legs right now and arms because of this son of a bitch.”

The president also said Democrats “are doing everything possible to disparage what we did with the hit on this monster” and that the other party “will be outraged by Soleimani’s evil crimes, not the decision to end his wretched life.”

Moments later in neighboring Iowa, Sen. Bernie Sanders, of Vermont, said he feared that Trump’s actions in Iran could lead the United States into a foreign policy quagmire of the highest level.

Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., said Trump had campaigned on stopping “endless wars” only to bring the country closer to them. And former Vice President Joe Biden said Soleimani’s killing was dangerous and would not have been necessary if Trump hadn’t pulled the U.S. out of a successful nuclear deal that the Obama administration had reached with Iran.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren pledged to bring U.S. combat troops back from the Middle East entirely, saying, “We should stop asking our military to solve problems that cannot be solved militarily.”

Trump also took on the leading Democratic candidates directly, saying of Sanders: “Bernie and the radical left cannot protect your family, nor can they protect our country.”

Winning back Wisconsin is a key part of Democrats’ 2020 strategy — and one of the reasons the party chose Milwaukee to host its national convention in July. Trump won the state by fewer than 23,000 votes in 2016 and he is expected to make frequent visits in the coming months as he works to maintain his edge.

Vice President Mike Pence warmed up the rally crowd by himself panning the Democratic candidates as too far left for the state.

“You know, I heard they’ve got another debate tonight. If it’s anything like the other ones, those people are going to be standing so far on the left I think that stage is going to tip over,” Pence quipped.

Trump supporters began lining up Monday evening outside the arena to make sure they would be able to get inside.

“I think the Wisconsin vote is very important, very important,” said Brenda Stoetzer, 60, from Hickory Hills, Ill. “And we need to just spread the message here that, you know, Trump is helping the people, the ordinary people. He’s not making the rich richer. He’s making everyone richer.”

Wisconsin’s primary is April 7.

## Trial: GOP senators differ on witnesses, depending on loyalty to the president

### FROM FRONT PAGE

The seven-member prosecution team will be led by the chairmen of the House impeachment proceedings, Reps. Adam Schiff of the Intelligence Committee and Jerry Nadler of the Judiciary Committee, two of Pelosi’s top lieutenants.

Ahead of Wednesday’s session, Schiff released new records from Lev Parnas, an associate of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, about the Ukraine strategy, including an exchange with another man about surveilling later-fired Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch.

Schiff said the new evidence should bring more pressure on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who is reluctant to allow witnesses to testify.

“If McConnell makes this the first trial in history without witnesses, it will be exposed for what it is and that is an effort to cover up for the president,” Schiff said.

Later Wednesday, the House managers planned to walk the articles across the Capitol to the Senate in a dramatic procession. The Senate trial is set to start Thursday.

McConnell opened the Senate dismissing what he called a rushed impeachment that is more about the politics of Democrats who don’t like Trump than the charges against him.

“This isn’t really about Ukraine policy or military matters,” McConnell said. “This has been naked partisanship all along.”

During Pelosi’s press conference announcing managers, Trump tweeted that impeachment was “another Con Job by the Do Nothing Democrats. All of this work was supposed to be done by the House, not the Senate!”

Trump’s trial comes against the backdrop of a politically divided nation in an election year.

The Senate is expected to transform into an impeachment court as early as Thursday, although significant proceedings wouldn’t begin until next Tuesday after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The Constitution calls for the chief justice of the United States to preside over senators, who serve as jurors.

The managers are a diverse group with legal, law enforcement and military courtroom experience, including Hakeem Jeffries,

of New York; Sylvia Garcia, of Texas; Val Demings, of Fla.; Jason Crow, of Colorado; and Zoe Lofgren, of California.

McConnell, who is negotiating rules for the trial proceedings, is under competing pressure from his party for more witnesses, from centrists who are siding with Democrats on the need to hear full testimony and conservatives mounting Trump’s defense.

Senate Republicans signaled they would reject the idea of simply voting to dismiss the articles of impeachment against Trump, as Trump himself has suggested. McConnell agreed he does not have the votes to do that.

McConnell said Tuesday, “Our members feel we have an obligation to listen to the arguments.”

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said he wants to hear from John Bolton, the former national security adviser at the White House, who others have said raised alarms about the alternative foreign policy toward Ukraine being run by Giuliani.

Democrats have been pushing Republicans to consider new testimony, arguing that fresh information has emerged during Pelosi’s monthlong delay in transmitting the charges.

Republicans control the chamber, 53-47, and are all but certain to acquit Trump. But it takes just 51 votes during the trial to approve rules or call witnesses. It also would take only 51 senators to vote to dismiss the charges against Trump.

At Tuesday’s private GOP lunch, Sen. Rand Paul, of Kentucky, warned that if witnesses are allowed, defense witnesses could also be called. He and other Republicans want to subpoena Biden and his son, Hunter, who served on the board of Burisma, a gas company in Ukraine, while his father was vice president.

McConnell prefers to model Trump’s trial partly on the process used for President Bill Clinton’s impeachment trial in 1999. It too contained motions for dismissal or calling new witnesses.

McConnell is hesitant to call new witnesses who would prolong the trial and put vulnerable senators up for reelection in 2020 in a bind. But he also wants to give those same senators ample room to show voters they are listening.

## Democrats to investigate ‘profoundly alarming’ Ukraine texts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A House committee chairman said his panel will investigate what he says are “profoundly alarming” text messages that have raised questions about the possible surveillance of former Ambassador

to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch before she was ousted by the Trump administration last spring.

House Democrats on Tuesday night released a trove of documents they obtained from Lev Parnas, a close associate of President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani. The mes-

sages show that a Trump donor named Robert F. Hyde, who is now running for a U.S. House seat in Connecticut, disparaged Yovanovitch in messages to Parnas and gave him updates on her location and cellphone use.

Rep. Eliot Engel, a New York Democrat who chairs the House

Foreign Affairs Committee, said Wednesday that the messages “suggest a possible risk” to Yovanovitch’s security in Kyiv before she was recalled from her post.

“These threats occurred at the same time that the two men were also discussing President Trump’s efforts, through Rudy

Giuliani, to smear the ambassador’s reputation,” Engel said.

He said the committee staff flagged the information for the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security and is seeking assurances steps have been taken to ensure the security of Yovanovitch and committee staff.



# NATION

## At debate, Warren sticks to her guns on Sanders' take

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Elizabeth Warren made a forceful case for a female president and stood behind her accusation suggesting sexism by progressive rival Bernie Sanders in a Democratic debate that raised gender as a key issue in the sprint to Iowa's presidential caucuses.

Sanders vehemently denied Warren's accusation, which threatened to split the Democratic Party's left flank — as well as the senators' longtime liberal alliance — at a critical moment less than three weeks before voting begins.

"Look at the men on this stage. Collectively they have lost 10 elections," Warren exclaimed on Tuesday night. "The only people on this stage who have won every single election that they've been in are the women."

An incredulous Sanders responded: "Does anybody in their right mind think a woman can't be elected president?" he asked. "Of course a woman can win."

There was a final moment of tension between Sanders and Warren after the debate ended. Having shaken the hands of her

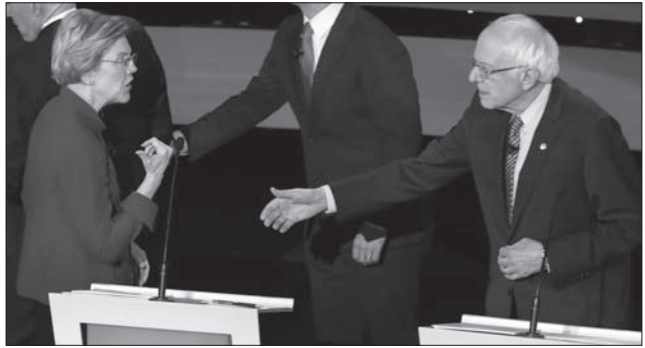
other competitors, Warren was shown in video declining to shake Sanders' extended hand.

With the Democratic field tightly bunched among four leading candidates, the debate offered an opportunity for separation. But none of the six candidates on stage had the kind of moment likely to reshape the race in the final weeks before voting starts. Instead, the debate was generally marked by a focus on weighty issues of foreign policy, climate change and how to provide health care for all Americans. Even when disputes emerged, most candidates quickly pivoted to note their larger differences with President Donald Trump.

For his part, Trump spent Tuesday night campaigning in Wisconsin, a state that is critical to his reelection effort. He tried to encourage the feud between Sanders and Warren from afar.

"She said that Bernie stated strongly that a woman can't win," Trump said. "I don't believe that Bernie said that, I really don't. It's not the kind of thing Bernie would say."

Despite such prodding, the debate stage drama was far from the explosion some Democrats



PATRICK SEMANS/AP

**Democratic presidential candidates Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., talk Tuesday after a debate in Des Moines, Iowa. During the debate, Warren stood behind her accusation suggesting sexism by Sanders. Immediately afterward, she declined to shake his extended hand.**

feared. Candidates moved with ease through a variety of topics, disagreeing with each other but generally avoiding personal attacks.

Sanders did step up his attacks on former Vice President Joe Biden over his past support of the Iraq War and broad free-trade agreements. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, who was mired in the middle of the pack, seized on Warren's shifting positions on health care. Billionaire Tom Steyer acknowledged making money from investments in the fossil fuel industry, but highlighted his decade-long fight to combat climate change, an issue that came up repeatedly through-

out the night.

Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., sometimes struggled for attention in a debate that often featured points of conflict between his rivals. Perhaps his strongest moment came when he described how, as a military veteran who is vocal about his faith, he could stand up to Trump in a general election.

"I'm ready to take on Donald Trump because when he gets to the tough talk and the chest thumping, he'll have to stand next to an American war veteran and explain how he pretended bone spurs made him ineligible to serve," Buttigieg said. "And if a guy like Donald Trump keeps

trying to use religion to somehow recruit Christianity into the GOP, I will be standing there not afraid to talk about a different way to answer the call of faith and insist that God does not belong to a political party."

Several candidates condemned Trump's recent move to kill Iran's top general and his decision to keep U.S. troops in the region.

"We have to get combat troops out," declared Warren, who also called for reducing the military budget.

Others, including Buttigieg, Biden and Klobuchar, said they favored maintaining a small military presence in the Middle East.

## Helmet woes strike 2nd all-female spacewalk

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Two NASA astronauts ventured out Wednesday on a second all-female spacewalk to finish upgrades to the International Space Station's power grid, but quickly ran into a helmet problem.

It was the second pairing of Jessica Meir and Christina Koch outside the orbiting lab. Last October, they teamed up for the world's first spacewalk by two women.

The women were barely a half-hour into their latest spacewalk when Koch's helmet camera and lights came loose. Meir tried to get the camera and light attachment back onto Koch's helmet, but could not get it into the proper grooves. Mission Control advised the women to remove the hood-like camera and light assembly, rather than waste any more time trying to attach it. The astronauts asked if the spacewalk would continue, given the lack of lighting for Koch.

"Good question and, yes, we will continue and we'll try to keep you two together as much as possible," Mission Control replied. The astronauts were relieved at the news. "Great. Perfect," they radioed.

"Just be careful," Mission Control

told groggy Koch. "You're missing that additional protection."

The helmet trouble put the spacewalkers behind in their work to replace old batteries outside the space station. NASA is in the midst of replacing decades-old nickel-hydrogen batteries outside the sprawling space station with more powerful, longer-lasting lithium-ion batteries. The batteries are part of the station's solar power network, keeping everything running when the outpost is on the night side of Earth.

Koch also went out with a male colleague twice last October to install three new batteries. But a charging unit then failed, prompting the need for unexpected repairs by Koch and Meir. Meanwhile, the rest of the critical battery installations were put on hold while engineers figured out why the charger failed so soon after new batteries went in.

Engineers now believe the charger got too cold in the extreme temperatures of space. The solution: exposing the chargers to the sun as much as possible during the battery work.

Mission Control expects Meir and Koch to replace three more of the old batteries, with the operation wrapping up during a third all-female spacewalk on Monday.



NASA/AP

**In this image taken from NASA video, Jessica Meir, hand seen at the extreme right, holds the helmet of fellow astronaut Christina Koch in place, after it came loose, during a spacewalk on Wednesday.**



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## NATION

# National Guard triples force in Puerto Rico

By ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

Puerto Rico has activated more than 650 of its National Guard members with 115 more traveling from New York to help construct and support tent shelters across the southern region of the island where thousands of residents continue to sleep outdoors for fear of another major earthquake.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Tuesday authorized the activation of troops for up to 90 days and said he intends to travel to the island to tour impacted areas along the southern edge of the U.S. territory.

Hundreds of small quakes, mostly too weak to feel, began rocking Puerto Rico on Dec. 28, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. More than 1,280 earthquakes have hit the southern region since then, according to the USGS. But a magnitude 5.8 earthquake hit Jan. 6 with a larger 6.4-magnitude quake striking just before dawn Jan. 7, which led Gov. Wanda Vazquez to declare an emergency and activate the National Guard. Since then, troop levels have increased as they continue to support requests from local governments and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Vazquez estimated damage from the largest earthquake at \$110 million, with a total of 559 structures affected. The Associated Press reported. More than 4,000 people have been staying in shelters.

On Saturday, a 5.9-magnitude quake didn't appear to cause injury or damage, but revived people's fears that the worst is not yet over.

The Puerto Rico National Guard is building tent cities in Ponce, Penuelas, Guayanilla, Yauco and Guanica that will shelter thousands of displaced people, said Lt. Col. Paul Dahlen, spokesman for the Puerto Rico National Guard. He estimated about 500



Puerto Rico National Guard

**Puerto Rico National Guard members build a tent Saturday to shelter people in Guanica following a series of devastating earthquakes in the southern region of the island.**



STEPHANIE HARGETT/U.S. Army

**Soldiers from the island's 430th Quartermaster Company of the Army Reserve prepare to support displaced citizens.**

to 600 homes were damaged, but hundreds of people were sleeping in the open air in case another earthquake hit.

"Many people don't feel safe in their houses," Dahlen said.

An aftershock forecast released by the Geological Survey on Monday predicted a 3% chance of another earthquake of 6.4-mag-

nitude or greater within the next seven days. Most likely, the aftershocks will decrease in severity over the next month, according to the forecast.

The National Guard Bureau in Washington also sent a team to Puerto Rico to help with the local mission, said April Cuningham, spokeswoman for the bureau.

"Joint liaison teams work closely with states and territories and coordinate with every level of government to rapidly provide much-needed resources," she said.

Each tent city built by the Guard can hold between 1,000 and 1,500 people, Dahlen said, adding that troops also provide security at the facilities. Some tents have air-conditioning and are prioritized for the elderly and families with small children. Others are being used as recreation spaces and dining facilities.

As of Monday evening, the National Guard had distributed more than 72,000 bottles of water and 30,000 meals, Dahlen said. The Guard also activated medical personnel, including mental health professionals and chaplains who are available to speak to civilians experiencing stress or trauma.

To provide laundry and shower services, about 200 soldiers from the island's 430th Quartermaster Company of the Army Reserve were activated Monday.

"If the local authorities need federal military assistance, there is no need to wait for resources

to arrive from outside Puerto Rico. Our command is already here on the island, prepositioned and ready to assist immediately," said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey W. Jurasek, senior Army officer in the Caribbean.

As of Wednesday, the laundry and shower facilities in Yauco and Guanica were operational.

"In addition to the military support, it's great to see the outpouring of grassroots organizations bringing food and water and supplies and entertainment to ease the suffering a little bit," he said. Some locations even have large projection screens to show children's movies.

"It helps the morale," Dahlen said.

The New York National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, is preparing to send a disaster relief bed-down system that supports about 150 people, at the request of Puerto Rican emergency management officials, according to a news release. The system includes air-conditioned tents that can house 16 to 20 people each, shower and latrine facilities, a kitchen and self-help laundry machines, water purification capabilities and generators.

The wing will also dispatch 26 Air National Guard specialists who will set up the facility with 15 remaining on site for up to 90 days to run the shelter system, according to the release.

Cuomo said in a statement that New York "will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the island during these challenging times."

Outside of these tent cities, the Puerto Rico National Guard is helping municipalities with everything from directing traffic to standby ambulance services to providing perimeter security at a prison.

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## Homeless rate among veterans drops to 10-year low

By STEVE BEYON  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Housing and veterans officials told House lawmakers Tuesday that the veteran homeless rate has dropped to a 10-year low as thousands of federal vouchers that could help get more veterans off the streets went unused.

"There are so many unused vouchers and so many homeless veterans remaining," Keith Harris, the national director of clinical operations for Veterans Health Administration, said Tuesday during a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing on veteran homelessness.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development reported last week that the homelessness rate among veterans is at

a 10-year low, as overall homelessness increased across the country. Some lawmakers and Department of Veterans Affairs officials have largely credited the decrease to the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program, which helps veterans with rental assistance and VA support services.

Harris said more than 800,000 veterans and their families have used the HUD-VASH program since 2010, calling it one of the "most important resources for ending veteran homelessness" and saying the collaboration between nonprofits and multiple state and federal agencies makes eliminating veteran homelessness an attainable goal.

Nationally, the homeless population is up 3%, which HUD attributes to a ballooning crisis in

California where homelessness increased 21% between 2018 and 2019. But the number of homeless veterans in the United States is down to 37,000, according to HUD. This is a decrease of 2% in the last year and a 50% decrease since 2010, said Hunter Kurtz, assistant secretary for Public and Indian Housing for HUD. Last year, about 8% of the homeless population were veterans.

But the program intended to help veterans find a place to live isn't being used by thousands of potentially eligible former service members due to a lack of VA staff and skyrocketing costs of living in some parts of the country, according to Harris.

"One homeless veteran is one too many," Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif., said during the hearing. "Right now we are not good

enough at identifying at-risk veterans and connecting them with services before they become homeless."

The HUD-VASH program has more than 100,000 vouchers issued nationally right now, but 11,000 are not being used by a veteran. Of the 37,000 homeless former service members, nearly one-third of them can possibly find subsidized housing.

A roadblock with vouchers for some veterans is rising living costs in some parts of the country, specifically urban areas, according to Harris.

"All over the country the vouchers are just not enough," said Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla. "Veterans are having a hard time because it's just not enough and they're having a hard time paying for things like electricity. We're

very fortunate to have nonprofits kick-in."

Harris said HUD is working to increase the number of federal subsidized living spaces, put a ceiling on rising rents and make the vouchers more useful. He also pointed to the VA being short staffed with case managers, which the department is seeking new ways to process homeless case work such as using contractors.

"One critical strategy [to ending veteran homelessness] is increasing the number of case managers," Harris said. "Along with the lack of affordable housing, the lack of case workers is unquestionably the great limiting factors in voucher utilization."

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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Man charged with mailing meth to inmate

**GA** MACON — A man sent some illegal holiday cheer to a woman in jail and he ended up getting arrested himself, officials in a Georgia county said.

News outlets reported Timothy Lee Snow, 40, sent the woman a Christmas card filled with drugs.

Bibb County Jail inmate Mary Beth Odum, 40, had told Snow over the phone how to put meth and other drugs into a card to send to her in jail, county sheriff's officials said.

Deputies intercepted a contraband-filled card filled with methamphetamine and Suboxone and began investigating Snow. On Jan. 9, deputies followed Snow as he left his residence and found him with meth, Xanax and a revolver. When they searched his home, deputies found more meth, Suboxone, marijuana, steroids, packing materials, a shotgun and a rifle.

## School bus catches fire on highway; no injuries

**MN** MAPLEWOOD — No one was hurt when a school bus carrying students to a basketball game caught fire on a Twin Cities highway.

Richfield Middle School said the bus was transporting seventh-grade students to a basketball game.

The Richfield School District sent another bus to pick up the 18 students and their coach. KSTP-TV reported the middle school said the bus engine caught on fire. The Minnesota State Patrol says no one was hurt and the fire remains under investigation.

## Police arrest man driving pickup missing 1 tire

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS — A man who drove his pickup for several miles along Interstate 70 without one of its front tires was arrested after another motorist called 911 to report a shower of sparks coming from the truck.

The motorist who spotted the pickup with bare metal grinding into the pavement followed it until state troopers caught up with the truck, State Police Sgt. John Perrine told The Indianapolis Star.

The driver was arrested for operating a vehicle while intoxicated with endangerment and operating without a license, Perrine said.

## World's largest jet lands for medical problem

**ME** BANGOR — One of the world's largest passenger jets made an unscheduled landing at Bangor International Airport because of a medical emergency involving a passenger, officials said.

The fire department needed to use its aerial ladder to retrieve the patient from the second level of the double-decker A380 because the airport's steps wouldn't reach the airplane's upper doors, said spokeswoman Aimee Thibodeau.



MARK ROGERS, ODESSA (TEXAS) AMERICAN/AP

## For the birds

Janae Rode of Midland and Chris Jackson of Odessa feed the birds at Memorial Gardens Park in Odessa, Texas, on Monday, enjoying the 72 degree weather. Rode was hugging a goose who she said likes her and is very protective of her. They come to the park about once a month, and the goose always comes for a visit.

The Emirates Airbus A380 from Dubai continued its flight to New York's John F. Kennedy Airport.

## Death of man hanging from tree 'suspicious'

**CA** SACRAMENTO — The California Highway Patrol is investigating the death of man whose body was found hanging from a tree near a highway in Northern California as suspicious.

The CHP North Sacramento said an anonymous 911 caller reported the dead man, the Sacramento Bee reported.

Authorities "located a deceased male in the trees, up the embankment, approximately 30 feet from the traffic lane," the CHP said in a news release.

"The male subject, who has not been identified at this time, had a rope tied around his neck and was hanging from a tree branch," it said.

## 2 volunteer troopers catch sleeping car thief

**FL** OAK HILL — Two volunteer troopers helped catch a suspected carjacker who was sleeping in a car that had been stolen the night before, of-

## THE CENSUS

**\$2K**

The approximate amount two bartenders received as a tip on a \$21 check. Bruce Girouard and Karen Vaillancourt said a customer left them a \$2,078.74 tip even though his bill was for only \$21.26 at the Pasta Loft in Milford, N.H. The man asked the bartenders to check his math before questions, WMUR-TV reported.

ficials said.

The auxiliary Florida Highway Patrol troopers were patrolling along Interstate 95 in Volusia County when they spotted a 2019 Chevy Malibu on the side of the road, Lt. Kim Montes said in a news release. Troopers Casper Johnson and Bernard Martin saw a sleeping man in the backseat.

They ran the tag and discovered the car had been stolen from a Delray Beach convenience store.

Volusia County Sheriff's deputies came to the troopers' aid and arrested Samuel Christie, 20. He was charged with possession of a stolen vehicle.

## Parents take ill newborn from hospital

**LA** MANY — Authorities

a Louisiana hospital with the newborn.

The baby and the mother both had intravenous drip feeds connected to them when they left the medical center in the Louisiana city of Many, state police said.

Charges were pending against Shaun Levy, 39, and Brittany Parrie, 28.

The nature of the child's illness was not disclosed.

## JFK memorabilia hits auction block

**MA** BOSTON — One of the most comprehensive private collections of John F. Kennedy memorabilia, one that chronicles his life from childhood to the White House, is for sale.

Hundreds of items associated with the former Democratic president are being offered as a single lot by Boston's RR Auction for a minimum of \$1.5 mil-

lion, although RR Executive Vice President Robert Livingston said it could get much more.

The collection shows Kennedy's intelligence, compassion and sense of humor, said Ronnie Paloger, a retired garment industry sales rep who spent years accumulating the collection.

He's selling now because he's 70.

"I ran out of money," said the Marina del Rey, Calif., resident who also once owned a massive trove of Muhammad Ali memorabilia. "This is my retirement fund."

## Group: 2 cats found in plastic bags along road

**PA** DILLSBURG — An animal welfare group says two "terrified" cats were found in plastic bags along the side of a road in Pennsylvania.

Speranza Animal Rescue said in a Facebook post that a volunteer spotted a box near a motel along Route 15 in Dillsburg in York County and stopped to check it out.

She reported finding the cats inside in separate plastic bags that were tied shut. She said she took the "cold and terrified" animals to a vet for treatment.

From wire reports



## NATION

# Airliner douses schoolkids with fuel in California

By STEFANIA DAZIO  
Associated Press

CUDAHY, Calif. — Federal authorities will investigate why an airliner with engine trouble dumped jet fuel over a densely populated area of Southern California while making an emergency return to the airport, dousing dozens of schoolchildren in a smelly vapor.

Delta Air Lines Flight 89 to Shanghai, with 181 passengers and crew on board, turned back to Los Angeles International Airport only minutes after taking off Tuesday.

The pilot reported a compressor stall in the right engine — damage to a jet turbine that can occur through malfunction or when a foreign object such as a bird hits an engine. The damage can reduce engine thrust or, in worst cases, lead to a fire. Planes can take off weighted down for their journey, but if they must land early because of an emergency, it can be necessary to dump fuel so that the aircraft is lighter to avoid damage.

The fuel sprayed out of the plane in two lines and descended at midday in the city of Cudahy and nearby parts of Los Angeles County, about 13 miles east of the airport. It fell on five elementary schools, officials said.

The fuel, described by fire officials as a vapor, caused minor skin and lung irritation to 56 children and adults but nobody was taken to the hospital and the only



MATT HARTMAN/AP

**Delta Air Lines Flight 89 to Shanghai, China, dumps fuel over Los Angeles on Tuesday.**

decontamination required was soap and water, officials said.

Diego Martinez, a sixth-grader at Park Avenue Elementary in Cudahy, said he and his classmates were outside for physical education class when they saw the airplane flying low overhead.



SCOTT VARLEY, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

**Firefighters allow parents into Park Avenue Elementary School where multiple people were treated for jet fuel exposure in Cudahy, Calif., on Tuesday.**

"It was very close," he said. Shortly afterward, the air filled with the pungent odor of fuel.

"It was very strong, the odor," the 12-year-old said.

Diego wasn't doused but some of his friends complained that their skin was itching.

Some teachers at Park Avenue had headaches from the smell, said Antonio Buenabad, area representative for the United Teachers Los Angeles union.

"They were anxious to get home and shower because the stench was very strong," he said of the teachers.

Delta Air Lines said the aircraft landed safely after releasing fuel, "which was required as part of normal procedure to reach a safe landing weight."

The Federal Aviation Administration said it is investigating.

"There are special fuel-dumping procedures for aircraft operating into and out of any major U.S. airport," the FAA said in a statement. "These procedures call for fuel to be dumped over designated unpopulated areas, typically at higher altitudes so the fuel atomizes and disperses before it reaches the ground."

However, pilots can deviate from the rules in an emergency for safety reasons, said Doug Moss, a retired airline captain and owner of AeroPacific Consulting, LLC, an aviation consulting firm based in Reno, Nev.

The pilot could have stayed over the ocean to dump his fuel but that could have taken up to an hour, Moss said.

Moss said when there is a compressor stall, the crew can't determine how much damage was

internally to the engine.

"The fan blades may have separated and cut into the fuel lines, leaving an uncontrollable fire as a future possibility," Moss said.

"He's flying an airplane with a damaged engine that may be on fire," Moss said. "So he has to make the decision: Do I spend the time to dump fuel or do I put this thing on the ground as soon as I can? You're not going to kill anyone by dumping fuel."

"There's no dereliction of duty. Everybody's trying to do the best they can but it's a fast-paced, dynamic ballgame and there's not a lot of time to think ... lives are at stake," Moss said. "He got it on the ground safely. Unfortunately, there was collateral damage. People got gas poured over them."

## Officials see nothing unusual in Western drone sightings

By MEAD GRUVER  
Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — People insist they have spotted fleets of large drones crisscrossing rural America's night sky, their mission mysterious, raising questions that have veered into conspiracy theories and launching an investigation.

Authorities in Colorado have tried to put those theories to rest, announcing that they have confirmed nothing unusual or criminal about dozens of weird drone reports since November. They were mostly hobbyist drones, commercial aircraft, stars, planets and weather phenomena.

Yet if history is any guide, the investigation that used a heat-detecting plane in Colorado's mystery-drone highway, with sightings that stretched into Nebraska and Wyoming, will settle nothing for many people.

Speculation persists about drones said to be as big as cars, flying in groups in grid patterns at night.

"Even the military has plausible deniability with this, defense contractors might be involved," Dan Carlson, a drone-

**"Even if the military has plausible deniability with this, defense contractors might be involved."**

Dan Carlson  
drone-spotting retired meteorologist

spotting retired meteorologist in western Nebraska, said Tuesday. "By the time they're four up to it, they'll have been in sky for four years."

Four times this year, Carlson said, drones have flown after dark near his farm outside Sidney, Neb.

Drones flew in pairs on two nights, he said. Their speed, impressive range — over the distant horizon without landing — and proximity to nearby missile silos makes him suspect the U.S. Air Force at least knows of the flights.

Uncertainty, if not paranoia, has proliferated about such sightings. Just don't

count Carlson among those peddling out-of-this-world explanations.

"I do not buy into the conspiracy theories. I am not living in fear of an alien invasion," he said.

He speculates the drones may be involved in some kind of military search-and-recovery practice, pursuing items hidden around the countryside during the daytime for training exercises at night.

F.E. Warren Air Force base in Cheyenne, Wyo., oversees 150 Minuteman III nuclear missiles in silos scattered across the prairie in the three-state region. The missiles need regular checking, maintenance and protection against threats, yet Air Force officials insist the drone reports have nothing to do with them.

"Our base is kind of a drone no-fly zone. So we do have counter-UAS — unmanned aerial systems — training that goes on within the confines of this installation. But any drones spotted outside this installation are not part of our fleet," said Lt. Jon Carlsbuff, a base spokesman.

Base personnel haven't seen any of the purported drones, he added, but they are

cooperating with the Federal Aviation Administration and FBI.

The Colorado Department of Public Safety, working with local law enforcement, didn't attempt to investigate drone sightings in Nebraska or Wyoming.

In northeastern Colorado, the agency found:

■ Of 90 drone reports received from Nov. 23 to Monday, 14 were smaller-sized hobbyist drones.

■ Of 23 drone reports between Jan. 6 and Monday, a period that involved flights of the heat-detecting plane working with investigators on the ground, 13 were smaller hobbyist drones, stars or planets and six were attributable to known commercial aircraft or atmospheric conditions. Authorities weren't able to identify fliers of the hobbyist drones.

■ Four confirmed sightings of the 23 were unidentified.

■ A drone reported to have flown near a Flight for Life medical helicopter during daytime didn't appear related to the recent sightings. Investigators couldn't confirm a violation occurred.

## WORLD

## Russia's Putin to choose new government after call for constitutional changes

By ILYA ARKHIPOV  
Bloomberg

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev resigned and said President Vladimir Putin will choose a new government hours after the Kremlin leader called for a series of constitutional changes in his annual address.

Medvedev, who became premier in 2012 after stepping down as president to make way for Putin's return to the Kremlin, will take up a new post as deputy chairman of the security council, the Kremlin said. He answers to Putin, who chairs the body as president.

The surprise announcement came just hours after Putin made his annual state-of-the-nation address, pledging again to boost living standards and economic growth. Russia has struggled to improve performance on those areas in recent years amid low oil prices and western sanctions. Medvedev's government has long been criticized for inefficiency, and his popularity ratings lag behind those of the president.

The two men appeared on state television in a choreographed announcement to tell ministers of Medvedev's departure and the resignation of the government. The reforms set out by Putin will mean "fundamental changes" to the constitution, Medvedev said.

"In these circumstances, I think it would be right for the government to resign," Medvedev said.

Putin, 67, said the government hasn't fulfilled all of its tasks, though he thanked it for its work.

The ruble fell as much as 0.6% before paring its loss to 0.3% at 61.62 per dollar at 4:54 p.m. in Moscow.

Medvedev served four years as president from 2008 when Putin left the Kremlin to comply with constitutional term limits. Initially seen as a standard-bearer for liberal reforms, he surrendered the presidency back to Putin at the end of his first term after they disclosed at a September 2011 congress of the ruling United Russia party that they had agreed on the job swap years earlier.

## Iran warns Europe's soldiers of 'danger' after nuke rebuke

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's president warned Wednesday that European soldiers in the Mideast "could be in danger" after three nations challenged Tehran over breaking the limits of its nuclear deal. Tehran's top diplomat, meanwhile, acknowledged that Iranians "were lied to" for days following the Islamic Republic's accidental shoot-down of a Ukrainian jetliner that killed 176 people.

President Hassan Rouhani's remarks in a televised Cabinet meeting represent the first direct threat he's made to Europe.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's admission, which came at a summit in New Delhi on Wednesday, represents the first time an Iranian official referred to earlier claims from Tehran that a technical malfunction downed the Ukraine International Airlines flight as a lie.

Speaking before his Cabinet, Rouhani showed a rarely seen level of anger in his wide-ranging

remarks on Wednesday.

"Today, the American soldier is in danger, tomorrow the European soldier could be in danger," Rouhani said. "We want you to leave this region, but not with war. We want you to go wisely. It is to your own benefit."

Rouhani did not elaborate.

European forces have been deployed alongside Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan. France also maintains a naval base in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, while Britain has opened a base in the island nation of Bahrain.

Rouhani separately criticized Europe's "baseless" words regarding the nuclear deal. Iran had been holding out for Europe to offer a means by which Tehran could sell its oil abroad despite U.S. sanctions. A hoped-for trading mechanism for other goods hasn't taken hold, however, and a French-pitched line of credit also hasn't materialized.

Zarif, speaking in New Delhi at the Raisina Dialogue, blamed U.S. "ignorance" and "arrogance" for

"fueling mayhem" in the Middle East. He also, however, acknowledged the anger Iranians felt over the plane shoot-down.

"In the last few nights, we've had people in the streets of Tehran demonstrating against the fact that they were lied to for a couple of days," Zarif said.

Black-and-white surveillance footage of the shoot-down obtained by the AP, filmed off a monitor by a mobile phone, appears to be taken near the town of Bidkaneh, northwest of Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport. That's the airport the Ukraine International Airlines flight took off from on Jan. 8.

The two minutes of footage purports to show one missile streaking across the sky and exploding near the plane. Ten seconds later, another missile is fired and explodes near the aircraft. A ball of flames then falls from the sky out of frame.

The footage corresponds with AP reporting, appears genuine and matches geographic features of the area.

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## FACES



ALLEN J. SCHABEN/Los Angeles Times

Billie Eilish, 18, will record the theme song for the next James Bond movie, "No Time to Die."

## Billie Eilish becomes youngest artist to pen Bond theme song

Associated Press

Breakthrough singer Billie Eilish is set to sing the theme song for the upcoming James Bond film, becoming the youngest artist to write and record a hit for the iconic film franchise.

Eilish, who turned 18 in December, recorded the song for the 25th Bond film, "No Time to Die," which debuts in U.S. theaters on April 10. She wrote the song with her brother Finneas; the two created her entire debut album together.

The untitled new song does not have a release date.

"It feels crazy to be a part of this in every way. To be able to score the theme song to a film that is

part of such a legendary series is a huge honor," Eilish said in a statement Tuesday. "James Bond is the coolest film franchise ever to exist. I'm still in shock."

Eilish is riding high off her successful 2019 debut album, "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?", which featured the No. 1 hit "Bad Guy." She's competing for six Grammy Awards at this month's show, including the top four prizes: album, song and record of the year, and best new artist. She was 17 when she earned those four top nominations, making her the youngest artist in Grammy history to achieve the feat.

"When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" was Spotify's most-streamed album of 2019.

### Elizabeth Banks chosen for Hasty Pudding honor

Harvard University's famed Hasty Pudding theater troupe has named actor and director Elizabeth Banks as the group's 2020 Woman of the Year.

The troupe's leaders made the announcement Tuesday, saying Banks was chosen because of her impact in Hollywood as a female director, producer and writer. Banks will be honored with a

parade through Cambridge on Jan. 31, followed by a celebratory roast where she will be awarded her pudding pot.

After the roast, the troupe will perform a preview of "Mean Ghouls," the group's second show with a cast that includes women.

### Ronan Farrow named for book critic award

Ronan Farrow has already won a Pulitzer Prize and George Polk Award for his reporting on Harvey Weinstein and the #MeToo movement. Now he's up for a literary honor, a National Book Critics Circle award. Farrow was among the nomi-

## Houston, Notorious B.I.G. among new Rock Hall class

By DAVID BAUDER  
Associated Press

Posthumous inductees Whitney Houston and The Notorious B.I.G. will lead a new class into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, joined by Depeche Mode, the Doobie Brothers, Nine Inch Nails and T-Rex.

The gospel-trained Houston, whose soaring voice transformed the Dolly Parton cover "I Will Always Love You" into a gigantic hit, was one of four artists elected after being on the ballot for the first time. The Doobie Brothers, Biggie and T-Rex were the others.

The annual induction ceremony will take place May 2 at the Public Auditorium in Cleveland, the city where the rock museum is located. The Saturday night show will be televised live on HBO for the first time.

Houston, who succumbed to years of drug abuse in 2012, was an instant success after being signed to a record contract at age 19. Her 1985 debut had three No. 1 singles: "Saving All My Love for You," "How Will I Know" and "The Greatest Love of All." She had seven consecutive singles top the charts, a first for any artist.

The daughter of gospel singer Cissy Houston and cousin of Dionne Warwick, she grew up in the business.

The imposing, Brooklyn-born rap artist Christopher Wallace took on the identities of The Notorious B.I.G. and Biggie Smalls and was massively influential as rap became music's dominant style in the 1990s. With hits like "Juicy" and "Big Poppa," he was the leader of an East Coast school of rap that found itself in a bitter rivalry with artists from the West Coast.

He was killed in a still-unresolved drive-by shooting in Los Angeles at age 24 in 1997. On the album, "Life After Death," with hits like "Mo Money Mo Problems" and "Hypnotize," he became the first artist to earn multiple No. 1 singles after his death.

Depeche Mode remains active,

but its biggest influence came in the 1980s, when its post-punk, synthesizer-dominated music made the Brits a favorite of the goth subculture. Hits included "Personal Jesus," "Just Can't Get Enough" and "Enjoy the Silence."

Depeche Mode shares with fellow inductees Nine Inch Nails the honor of having one of their signature songs covered by country legend Johnny Cash, who recorded "Personal Jesus" and NIN's "Hurt" during his late-career resurgence.

With songs like "Closer," NIN was a leader of the industrial rock movement in the 1990s. Like Green Day, a memorable performance in the mud at Woodstock '94 brought them a wider audience. Leader Trent Reznor has become a go-to soundtrack producer in addition to his continued work with Nine Inch Nails.

The Doobie Brothers weren't critical favorites, but they had some indelible rock hits in the 1970s, including "Listen to the Music," "Black Water" and "China Grove." They're embarking on a 50th anniversary tour this summer, bringing members Michael McDonald, Pat Simmons, Tom Johnston and John McFee together for the first time in 25 years, and a rock hall induction makes for perfect publicity.

The British band T-Rex was known primarily for its 1970s hit "Bang a Gong (Get it On)" and, to a lesser extent, "Jeepster." The death of leader Marc Bolan in 1977 ended the band.

The two non-performing inductees may be able to bring some star power with them. Music manager Irving Azoff has watched the finances for several bands, but is best-known as the manager of the Eagles since 1974. Jon Landau is a former music journalist, known for an indelible line when he saw a concert by a little-known artist in 1974: "I saw rock 'n' roll's future and its name is Bruce Springsteen." Shortly thereafter, he became Springsteen's manager, a job he still holds today.

## 'Dr. Strange' director quits, cites creative differences

From wire services

Marvel's "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" has lost its director.

Scott Derrickson announced Jan. 9 on Twitter that he and the studio "mutually agreed to part ways" on the "Doctor Strange" sequel "due to creative differences," but that he will remain an executive producer.

Slated for release in May 2021, "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" was among the titles announced as part of Marvel's Phase 4 during the studio's San Diego Comic-Con presentation in July.

In a statement, Marvel Studios confirmed that the two parties

had "amicably parted ways ... due to creative differences."

"We remain grateful to Scott for his contributions to the MCU," said Marvel.

nees announced over the weekend by the NBCC.

His "Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators," which tracks his reporting on allegations of sexual harassment and assault against Weinstein, is a finalist in autobiography.

Critics also nominated Chanel Miller's "Know My Name," the acclaimed memoir by the woman sexually assaulted by Stanford University student Brock Turner.

### Spike Lee picked to lead Cannes Film jury

Spike Lee will lead the jury of this year's Cannes Film Festival,

and festival organizers hope the provocative American director will "shake things up" at the gathering of the world's cinema elite.

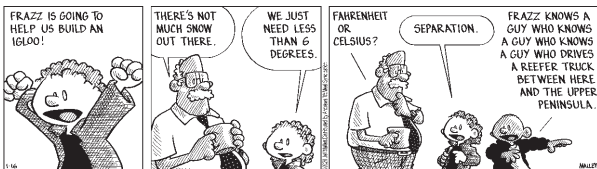
Lee said he was "honored to be the first person of the African diaspora" chosen for the prestigious position.

Festival organizer Thierry Fremaux said naming the first black president of the Cannes jury wasn't a political decision, but "a message of universality."

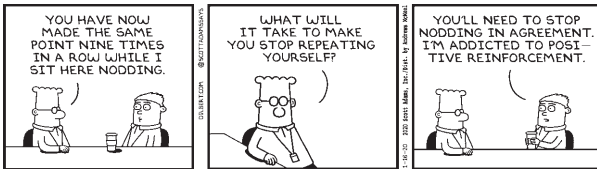
Many of Lee's films have been shown at Cannes, and his "BlackKkklansman" won a major prize at Cannes last year. This year's festival runs May 12-23, and the rest of the jury members will be announced in April.



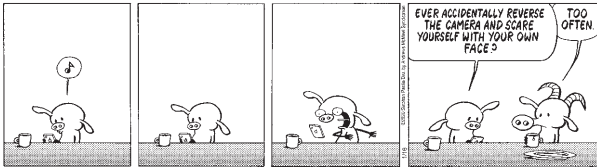
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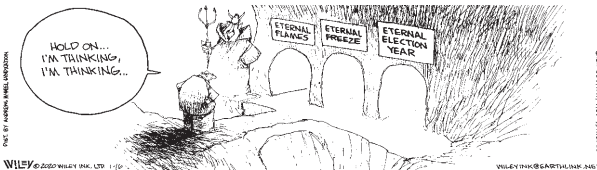
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18					19				20	21		
			22						23			
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32					33				34			
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			39					40	41			
42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			

### ACROSS

- 50-and-over org.
- Scott's refusal
- Boutique
- Mr. Stravinsky
- Under the weather
- Syringe, for short
- Peacekeeping org.
- Casual shirt
- Tennis score
- Quake
- "Liar Liar" star Jim
- Vegetable peeler brand
- Stickum
- Vipers
- Flew off the handle
- Wire measure
- Yale grad
- Corn serving
- Instrument in a Dixieland band
- Picnic invaders
- Light brown
- Gmail alternative
- Cogitates
- Maidens of myth
- Suspend
- Here, to Henri
- Popular cookie
- Malaria symptom
- Lucy of "Elementary"

### DOWN

- "Misbehavin'" network
- Highland hat
- Salon jobs
- "Mad Men" network
- Part of RSVP
- Element No. 78
- Flamenco cry
- Element No. 22
- Squealer
- Decade parts (Abbr.)
- Mountain chains
- Pen filler
- Candy bar nut
- Cry of dismay
- Power co. supply cuisine
- Stone of "Basic Instinct"
- Element No. 1
- Mayberry boy
- Shetland, for one
- Symbol of strength
- Turkish title
- Espionage org.
- River deposit
- Quarry
- Roll call reply
- Lays down the lawn

### Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	O	A	P	B	U	S	A	D	A	M
E	S	T	E	A	N	I	B	E	N	E
W	H	O	L	E	H	O	G	O	V	A
S	A	M	O	S	N	U	D	I	S	T
				S	E	R	A	B	E	L
F	I	J	I	A	S	H	E	D	A	D
U	S	A	S	I	T	A	R	O	L	E
R	O	I	P	L	O	T	T	G	I	F
				L	A	I	R	E	D	O
H	A	B	I	T	S	U	P	T	O	N
A	L	I	D	S	E	A	H	O	R	S
L	O	R	E	N	A	H	F	I	L	E
F	E	D	S	S	R	A	F	O	O	D

1-16

CRYPTOQUIP

J R I M K V R O E K P H J E G O F

J B N R R F E Y K B N Y S S Y J H M I H I M

K G E Y S P R S Z H I M G R S U Y B K U Y J :

"VQY VQY VFKBZVRKUS."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I SAY TOTALLY SHAVE YOUR HEAD BEFORE DOING AN EVIL DEED. IF YOU'RE GOING TO SIN, SIN BALDLY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals G

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Ernie Gates

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# OPINION

## Despite China's plans, time's on Taiwan's side

By GEORGE F. WILL  
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON With the totalitarians' talent for invective and the Leninist faith that "history" has a Marxist mind of its own, a Beijing-run "news" agency dismissed Taiwan's presidential election results as "a temporary fluke" and "bubbles left behind by the tides of history." Actually, this election, just 48 days after Hong Kong's astounding repudiation of Beijing in November voting, is another boulder in a growing avalanche of evidence, from the islands of Hong Kong and Taiwan to Central Europe, that China need not be accommodated.

The landslide reelection of President Tsai Ing-wen happened despite Beijing's strenuously expressed objections, economic pressures (e.g., refusing visas to tourists wanting to visit Taiwan, where tourism produces more than 4% of GDP), military intimidation (last year, Beijing's fighter jets crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait for the first time in two decades) and surreptitious but flagrant electoral interference.

In a January 19 speech, China's President Xi Jinping declared that Taiwan (the Republic of China) "must and will be" reunited with the People's Republic of China because this is "the great trend in history." Last September, the Twitter account believed to be controlled by Beijing said "once we have dealt with Hong Kong, we will settle the scores with Taiwan, military unification is unavoidable."

Actually, Hong Kong has dealt with Beijing. Taiwanese voters saw many months of massive Hong Kong protests against Beijing's attempts to slowly suffocate the city's freedom. These attempts have revealed the nonsensical nature of the "one country, two systems" fudge by which China disguises the despotic future it envisions for both Hong Kong and Taiwan. They will not go gently into the totalitarian night that Evan Osnos describes in *The New Yorker*:

By DAN CERRILLO  
Special to Stars and Stripes

Twenty veterans and active-duty personnel die by suicide every day. In one 15 veterans is dealing with substance use disorder.

Let those statistics sink in. As a member of the elite Navy SEAL Team 7 and SEAL Team 1 with many missions under my belt, I was fully prepared to lose my own life for my country. Although being at war is stressful and intense, I thrived on the call to duty. While I was prepared for war, I was not prepared for the pain of losing my friends in battle.

During my active duty, our team went on eight missions a night for two to three weeks straight. In our spare time, we'd get drunk to numb the pain of what was happening. When I returned home, things got progressively worse with my family. I was

Then, during a hand-to-hand combat encounter with an al-Qaida fighter in a doorway in Sadr City, Iraq, a breaching charge exploded and tore through the enemy combatant. I was severely injured: My back was broken, my lung collapsed, and my shoulder was dislocated.

I recovered, but suffered with nightmares, trouble sleeping and chronic pain from my injuries. My doctor said, "You're depressed. Go to the gym, work out and get some sleep." Instead, I ate six cocaine pills a day and drank myself to sleep.

When I returned home, things got progressively worse with my family. I was



CHIANG YU-YING/AP

A supporter of Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen cheers for Tsai's reelection in Taipei, Taiwan, on Saturday.

"Xi believes that orthodox commitment to Communism is paramount as his country tends off Western influences. ... In a modern twist, 90 million party members have been given an app loaded with Xi's speeches, quizzes about his life story, and videos on history. (The app keeps track of what they finish.)"

There is the essence of totalitarianism: Not that you cannot participate in politics, but that you must participate.

The Taiwan question, Xi says, "should not be passed down generation after generation." What question? Taiwan has been effectively a sovereign nation for generations. Taiwan is independent — it has its own legislature, currency, travel documents, diplomats, etc. — and only a major war (America is committed to defending Taiwan against attempts to change its status by force) can alter this. A bilateral U.S.-Taiwan trade agreement should be the next acknowledgment of Taiwan's sovereignty.

short and gruff with my wife and three children, and I expected my home to be run with military precision. I became angry over the slightest things — shoes left in the foyer or dirty dishes on the counter. I was down to just 45 minutes of sleep a night because I couldn't quiet my mind.

Three months later, I finally got a psychological referral to see a counselor. He was late, ended our session early, gave me a prescription for some Adderall and Ambien, and went on his way.

We all know the stories of the Department of Veterans Affairs being bombarded with veterans seeking treatment for life-altering injuries, chronic pain and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder. The system is so overwhelmed that it simply can't accommodate all veterans who need help.

There are community-based programs and nonprofits that are filling the VA gaps, but we must do more or we will continue to fail our veterans miserably. We can no longer wait until they return from combat to take action. There's a lot of talk about suicide and addiction among vets, but these conversations are young. We late for the thousands of men and women who have already died.

In order to truly turn the tide, we must be proactive. We must provide military personnel with resources in the field to teach them coping mechanisms before they become so far gone that they turn to a bottle, a pill or a bullet to end their suffering.

Time is on Taiwan's side. There is a steady increase in the majority of Taiwan's 23.5 million people who self-identify as Taiwanese rather than Chinese. In last Saturday's legislative elections, the average age of candidates from Tsai's party (38) was almost 25 years younger than those of the principal opposition party.

Youth will be served. In a Washington Post column last month, Zdenek Hrib, the 38-year-old mayor of Prague, noted that in 2019 China canceled its invitation to four Czech musical ensembles because of Tibet's flag flies over Prague's city hall. China is attempting to extinguish Tibet's national identity. Hrib also wrote, "Being a doctor, I have also publicly condemned the forced extraction of organs from members of the Muslim Uighur minority and other prisoners of the [Beijing] regime." Furthermore, Prague balked when Beijing insisted on — Hrib's predecessor as mayor had agreed to — a clause in a "sister-city" agreement that renounced the independence of Tibet and Taiwan. China canceled the agreement. So, on Monday, Prague signed a sister-city agreement with Taipei, Taiwan's capital, where Hrib went two months ago as a medical student, and where he has been made an honorary citizen. "I vowed during the campaign," Hrib says, "that I would return to our hallowed post-communist traditions of honoring democracy and human rights."

The Financial Times reports that when, at a reception welcoming diplomats to Prague, China's ambassador demanded that Taiwan's representative be expelled from the reception, Hrib replied that he does not throw out invited guests. "So he repeated his request multiple times, and I looked at the queue of other ambassadors waiting for my welcome. They were tapping his shoulder and saying: 'Maybe you could do this somewhere else.'"

Bad manners and execrable behavior can both be reflections of a disrespect for civilized norms by a bully invoking "history" as his alibi. China is learning, or coming to its ideology, that people make history, not the other way around.

How does this approach work? It starts with getting the therapist out of the treatment room and into the field. For a guy who has been armed to the teeth, wearing 90 pounds of body armor as he trudges through the desert relying on his own skills for survival, walking into a counseling office feels like a dangerous mission. There's no way he's going to open up to someone in a dress shirt and tie who's never even held a weapon.

By embedding counselors in-uniform with military units to interact with, relate to, and meet the warrior on their own terms, we can get our soldiers talking. We need counselors to be out there on the range, sitting next to these men and women in the chow hall, and living and working among them so they can truly understand what our nation's heroes go through every single day.

We must do better. Those who have voluntarily served our country deserve the best care possible, and we have an inherent obligation to help these men and women get the support they need.

Dan Cerrillo is chief of staff for American Addiction Centers and is Washington State Ambassador for the Navy SEAL Foundation. He also sits on the Board of Directors for the Navy SEAL Fund. A graduate of SEAL's Class 194, Cerrillo served with SEAL Team 1, SEAL Team 7 and the Naval Special Warfare Advanced Training before seeking medical retirement after over a decade of service. As a veteran, he's also worked as an executive coach, entrepreneur and high school and college football coach.





## NBA

## Around the NBA

## Halfway through, three's are up, scoring's down

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

**I**t's halftime.  
The midway point of the NBA regular season arrives this week — there are 1,230 games between October and April, and after Thursday night's slate goes into the books 618 games will have been played with 612 left to go.

Making statistical judgments after a few games, or even a few weeks, isn't the wisest thing. But with 50% of the season done, it seems like appropriate enough of a sample size to point out a few trends.

## Three's, again

The league records for three-pointers made and attempted are going to get broken for the eighth consecutive year.

But the growth rate in that department seems to be slowing down.

First, the numbers: NBA teams combined to make 27,955 three-pointers last season and attempt 78,742, both of which are records. That was an increase of 8.3% on makes from 2017-18 and an increase of 10.4% on attempts.

This year, the league is on pace to make more than 29,000 three-pointers and attempt nearly 83,000 of them. Both would be records, of course, but the increases over last season are on pace to be only 4.7% on makes and 5.1% on attempts.

And while the league's love affair with the three-pointer is nothing new, it's still a bit mind-boggling to put it in perspective. When this soon-to-be-eight-year run of record-setting began, NBA teams made 17,603 three's and attempted 49,067 of them.  
How much has it changed? This year's projected final numbers, compared to those — up 66% on makes, up 69% on attempts.

## Scoring down (sort of)

Maybe defenses have caught up to the offense-friendly officiating emphasis that went into place at the start of last season.

Scoring is down a tiny bit from last year. In 2018-19, teams averaged 111.2 points per game. This year, it's down to 110.4 per game.

But that is still on pace to be the 15th-highest scoring season in the NBA's 74-year history — and the second-highest in the last 35 years.

## James Harden

Any look at numbers must include what Houston guard James Harden is doing.

He's averaging 37.8 points per game, putting him on pace for the fifth-highest mark in NBA history. Wilt Chamberlain owns the top three (50.4 in 1961-62, 44.8 in 1962-63 and 38.4 in 1960-61). Elgin Baylor is fourth, at 38.3 per game in 1961-62.



BRANDON DILL/AP

**Houston Rockets guard James Harden, right, drives against Memphis Grizzlies guard Dillon Brooks. Harden is averaging 37.8 points a game, which would be the fifth-highest average ever.**



RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ/AP

**At 35, Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, left, is on pace to win his first assist crown. He's averaging 10.7 a game.**

Harden's scoring will be (and already has been) a rallying cry for his MVP candidacy, just as it was last season when he averaged 36.1 points per game — and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo won the award.

Precedent is not in Harden's MVP favor.

Chamberlain didn't win MVP in his three highest-scoring seasons, nor did Baylor when he had his best scoring year. In all three cases, Boston's Bill Russell won the award — without averaging more than 18.9 points per game in that stretch. He did average nearly 24 rebounds in each of those seasons, and the Celtics won the NBA championship in all three of those years as well.

Harden, however, could seriously challenge the three-point

single-season record. Golden State's Stephen Curry made 402 in his unanimous MVP season of 2015-16; Harden is on pace for 414 this season, provided he plays in every Houston game the rest of the way.

## Lebron's assists

LeBron James is well on his way to winning his first assist crown, leading the NBA with 10.7 per game entering Wednesday — more than one assist per game ahead of Phoenix's Ricky Rubio.

Like so many other things James does, an assist crown would be historic.

James is 35. He would become the second-oldest assist champion in NBA history; Steve Nash was 37 when he won that title for

the final time.

As far as first-time winners, James would become the oldest.

Jerry West won his lone assist title when he was 33. Lenny Wilkens and Mark Jackson were both 32. Wilt Chamberlain and Rod Strickland were both 31.

Even Utah's John Stockton — the king of assists — was 34 when he won his final assist title.

## A lot of good ...

There is a chance that there could be as many 50-win teams as the league has ever seen.

At the midway mark, there are 12 teams with realistic chances of getting to 50 wins this season. If they all get there — and it's not exactly improbable, either — it would tie the record for most teams reaching that standard in a single season.

The mark was set in 2009-10. That season, Boston, Oklahoma City, San Antonio, Cleveland, Phoenix, Dallas, the Los Angeles Lakers, Utah, Portland, Orlando, Denver and Atlanta all won between 50 and 61 games.

## ... And a lot of bad

Meanwhile, there are 17 teams on pace to finish with losing records.

As of now, there are the 12 teams with a great shot at 50 or more wins.

Then there's Oklahoma City, the lone team in the middle, on pace for about 46 wins.

And then there is everyone else, all with records below .500 at this point.

## The week ahead

A game to watch for each of the next few days ...

**Thursday**, Boston at Milwaukee: A matchup of two of the best in the Eastern Conference.

**Friday**, Portland at Dallas: It should be an elite guard showdown, Damian Lillard vs. Luka Dončić.

**Saturday**, Sacramento at Utah: In what is becoming an annual tradition, the Jazz are wildly underrated.

**Sunday**, Indiana at Denver: Pacers still hovering on pace for 50 wins, Nuggets just keep winning.



**Celtics (27-11)**  
**at Bucks (36-6)**  
AFN-Sports  
2 a.m. Friday CET  
10 a.m. Friday JKT



**Trail Blazers (17-24)**  
**at Mavericks (25-15)**  
AFN-Sports  
3:35 a.m. Saturday CET  
11:35 a.m. Saturday JKT

# NBA



BRANDON DILL/AP

Grizzlies guard Ja Morant looks to pass the ball over Houston Rockets forward PJ Tucker and guard Austin Rivers during Tuesday's game in Memphis, Tenn. Morant had 26 points and eight assists.

## Morant, Brooks carry Grizzlies past Rockets

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Early this season, the young Memphis Grizzlies were still learning how to close out games, a shortfall the team has overcome during its longest winning streak in more than three years.

The Grizzlies outscored the Houston Rockets 36-27 in the fourth quarter Tuesday night as Memphis pulled away for a 121-110 victory, stretching the Grizzlies' winning streak to six games — their longest since December 2016.

Rookie guard Ja Morant had 26 points and eight assists, and Dillon Brooks scored 24 to lead Memphis. Jonas Valanciunas added 19 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 15 despite going 6-for-16 from the floor.

Morant missed only one of his 11 shots, becoming the first rookie in NBA history to score at least 25 points while handing out eight or more assists and shooting 90% or better from the floor.

"Early on, we would get stagnant, and we would run the same thing over and over," Brooks said of the team's fourth-quarter problems earlier in the season. "Now, we're getting more diversity with Ja getting to the middle and making great plays and great decisions."

Brooks also was responsible for guarding Rockets star James Harden, the NBA's leading scorer. Harden perhaps had more scoring duties against Memphis as backcourt mate Russell Westbrook sat out to rest on the opening night of a back-to-back. Harden scored 41 points, his fifth straight game against the Grizzlies surpassing 40. But he shot 13-for-37, including 5-for-19 from

three-point range.

That included missing all seven shots in the fourth quarter.

"There were little things," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said. "Most importantly, we couldn't keep the Grizzlies in front of us. They finished very well at the rim on a lot of fast-break possessions. ... We didn't do enough to stop them."

Eric Gordon finished with 23 points for Houston, and Clint Capela had 16 points and 16 rebounds.

Capela said in games the Rockets have lost "finishing defensively, we weren't good enough. Our goal is always to keep the team under 100 points, which didn't happen."

The teams were tied at 95 with about eight minutes left when the Grizzlies went on an 11-1 run fueled by three-pointers from Solomon Hill, Brooks and Morant. That gave Memphis a 106-96 lead with five minutes remaining.

The win left the Grizzlies clinging to eighth place in the Western Conference, a half-game ahead of the idle San Antonio Spurs.

"Every game is a statement game at this point," Jackson said, "because you are playing for seeding, playing for the playoffs. Everybody is trying to work towards that, but definitely, when you're on a winning streak, it gives you a bit more energy."

Westbrook also sat out Houston's previous game at Memphis on Nov. 4, which was the second of a back-to-back. ... With Westbrook out, Austin Rivers started at guard alongside Harden. Rivers was given the nod over Gordon. "Someone has to chase Morant around, and I want Austin to do that," D'Antoni said.

## Roundup

# Leonard's 43 lift Clippers past Cavaliers

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 43 points in three quarters as the Los Angeles Clippers routed the Cleveland Cavaliers 128-103 Tuesday.

According to Sportradar, it was only the second time since 1996 a Clippers player scored at least 40 points in the first three quarters. Lou Williams had 40 against Golden State in a 2018 game.

Leonard played 29 minutes and was 14-for-22 from the floor, including 6-for-10 on three-pointers. He was two points from tying his regular-season career high.

Williams added 24 points for Los Angeles, who played again without injured star Paul George. They have won five of six and had six scorers in double figures.

Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 25 points and Cedi Osman added 21. Rookie guard Darius Garland, the fifth overall pick in last June's draft, had 14 points and a career-high 10 assists for his first double-double.

**Jazz 118, Nets 107:** Joe Ingles matched his career high with 27 points, Rudy Gobert had 22 points and 18 rebounds, and Utah ran its winning streak to 10 games by winning at Brooklyn.

Donovan Mitchell returned from a one-game absence with an illness to score 25 points — 14 in the fourth quarter — and Bojan Bogdanovic had 18 for the Jazz, who opened a 20-point lead and turned back every attempt by Nets to make it close.

Kyrie Irving had 32 points and a season-high 11 assists for Brooklyn in his second game back from a shoulder injury.

Utah has won 15 of 16.

**Bucks 128, Knicks 102:** Giannis Antetokounmpo needed only 21 minutes on the court to score 37 points and lead host Milwaukee past New York.

Antetokounmpo did not play in the fourth quarter after the Bucks built a 32-point lead entering the final period on the way to sweeping the three-game season series with the Knicks.

Khris Middleton added 17 points and Ersan Ilyasova had 14 points and seven rebounds for Milwaukee, which led by as many as 35 and improved its record to an NBA-best 36-6.

Julius Kandle had 25 points and 15 rebounds to pace the Knicks (11-30), and rookie R.J. Barrett added 22 points. Bobby Portis



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, left, shoots as Cleveland Cavaliers center Tristan Thompson defends. Leonard had a season-high 43 points in a 128-103 win Tuesday in Los Angeles.

had 20 off the bench.

**Mavericks 124, Warriors 97:** Dwight Powell scored 21 points and was 9-for-9 from the field in Dallas' victory at Golden State.

Luka Dončić added 20 points and eight rebounds as the Mavericks won their fourth straight against the Warriors — three in a row on their home floor.

Jordan Poole came off the bench to score 17 points for Golden State. Fellow reserve Eric Paschall added 16, but the Warriors lost their eighth consecutive game and fourth straight at Chase Center.

Injury-plagued Golden State lost another player when guard Jacob Evans III was taken to a hospital to be evaluated for a head injury. He was helped off the court with 4:38 left in the first half after getting hit with an elbow by Powell as they fought for a rebound.

**Hawks 123, Suns 110:** Trae Young scored 21 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter and host Atlanta pulled away late to beat Phoenix.

It was Young's 20th game with at least 30 points this season. He got help from backcourt partner Kevin Huerter, who scored 23 points and set career highs with 15 rebounds and eight assists. John Collins added 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Hawks, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	11	.711	—
Toronto	25	14	.641	2½
Philadelphia	25	16	.610	3½
Brooklyn	19	21	.462	9½
New York	11	30	.268	17½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	27	12	.692	—
Orlando	19	21	.475	8½
Indiana	15	28	.349	14
Washington	13	26	.333	14
Atlanta	9	32	.220	19
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	36	6	.857	—
Denver	25	15	.625	10
Chicago	14	27	.341	21½
Detroit	14	27	.341	21½
Cleveland	12	29	.293	23½

### Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	27	11	.711	—
Dallas	25	15	.625	1½
Memphis	19	22	.463	8
San Antonio	17	21	.447	8½
New Orleans	15	26	.366	12
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	28	12	.700	—
Portland	27	12	.692	½
Oklahoma City	23	17	.575	5
Minnesota	17	24	.415	11½
Denver	15	24	.385	12½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	28	13	.683	½
Phoenix	16	24	.400	17
Sacramento	15	25	.375	18
Golden State	9	23	.214	25

Monday's games				
New Orleans 117, Detroit 110, OT				
Indiana 101, Philadelphia 95				
Boston 113, Chicago 101				
Memphis 121, Houston 110				
Portland 115, Charlotte 112				
Orlando 114, Sacramento 112				
L.A. Lakers 128, Cleveland 99				
Tuesday's games				
Brooklyn at Philadelphia				
Utah 118, Brooklyn 107				
Memphis 121, Houston 110				
Milwaukee 128, New York 102				
L.A. Clippers 128, Cleveland 103				
Dallas 124, Golden State 97				
Wednesday's games				
Brooklyn at Philadelphia				
Detroit at Boston				
San Antonio at Miami				
Indiana at Minnesota				
Denver at Golden State				
Washington at Chicago				
Charlotte at Denver				
Dallas at Sacramento				
Orlando at L.A. Lakers				
Thursday's games				
Phoenix at New York				
Boston at Milwaukee				
Utah at New Orleans				
Denver at Golden State				
Orlando at L.A. Clippers				
Friday's games				
Chicago at Philadelphia				
Minnesota at Indiana				
Washington at Toronto				
Cleveland at Memphis				
Miami at Oklahoma City				
Atlanta at San Antonio				
Portland at Dallas				

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL/SPORTS BRIEFS

## Top 25 roundup

# Consolation prize: Clemson shocks Duke

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — What a wild ride the past four days have been for Clemson fans.

The Tigers beat No. 3 Duke 79-72 on Tuesday night to sandwich wins over the Atlantic Coast Conference's basketball blue bloods around Monday's loss in the College Football Playoff title game.

Tuesday night's win over the Blue Devils was the highest-profile upset for the Tigers (9-7, 3-3 ACC) since they beat No. 1 North Carolina on their home court in February 2001. And just like that day, students rushed the court at Littlejohn Coliseum.

On Saturday, Clemson beat North Carolina in Chapel Hill for the first time in program history, ending a 59-game losing streak on the Tar Heels' home court and setting off a locker room celebration that looked like the aftermath of an NCAA Tournament win. The Tigers have won three in a row since falling below .500 in a Dec. 31 loss to Miami.

"2020 is starting to feel like our year," said Amir Simms, who led Clemson with a career-high 25 points.

The Blue Devils (15-2, 5-1) came into the game as 10½-point favorites and were leading the nation with an average margin of victory of 21.5 points. Duke had not lost since a stunning home defeat to Stephen F. Austin in November.

Clemson fans, stung by the football Tigers' first loss in 30 games — a 42-25 defeat against LSU Monday night in New Orleans — stopped moping less than 24 hours later. Duke never had a bigger lead than 4-0.

Simms and Tevin Mack, who scored 22 points, kept dragging Duke's big men around the perimeter.

"We tried to move their guys around a lot. They have a lot of size," Clemson coach Brad Brownell said.

That opened up the lane for Clemson's offense. Seventeen of the Tigers' 30 baskets were layups or dunks, including one by John Newman III that was so nasty it got a shout-out on Twitter from Magic Johnson.

"Simms was spectacular tonight in how he controlled the game," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

The Blue Devils led 62-59 with 6:40 re-

maining. That's when Clemson took control with a 14-3 run, including eight points from Simms. His three-point play made it 73-65 with 2:16 remaining.

Mack finished 10-for-14 from the field. Simms was almost as efficient, shooting 10-for-15, and he had nine rebounds and five assists.

Vernon Carey Jr. scored 20 points for Duke and Tre Jones had 17.

**No. 6 Kansas 66, Oklahoma 52:** Isaiah Moss scored 20 points to help the visiting Jayhawks beat the Sooners.

Stepping into the starting lineup in place of leading scorer Devon Dotson, who sat out with a hip injury, Moss made six of 11 three-pointers.

Udoka Azubuike had 16 points and 14 rebounds and Marcus Garrett added 15 points for Kansas (13-3, 3-1 Big 12).

**No. 7 San Diego State 64, Fresno State 55:** Malachi Flynn scored 20 points, Yanni Wetzell added 17 and the visiting Aztecs remained undefeated.

San Diego State (18-0, 7-0 Mountain West Conference) is one of two unbeaten teams left in Division I, along with Auburn. The Aztecs extended their nation-best winning streak to 18 games, including a nation-best nine straight wins on the road.

Fresno State (5-12, 1-5) led 21-19 with 5:32 left in the first half, but went scoreless the rest of the half.

**No. 11 Louisville 73, Pittsburgh 68 (OT):** Panthers forward Terrell Brown thought he had a game-tying tip-in with 21 seconds to play, but he was called for a foul on the field, allowing the visiting Cardinals to escape with a victory.

Pitt guard Trey McGowens' driving layup attempt bounced off the rim, and Brown put it back, appearing to tie the game, but he was whistled for an over-the-back foul against Louisville's Malik Williams.

Williams hit both free throws, securing the final margin of victory.

**No. 12 West Virginia 81, TCU 49:** Derek Culver scored 17 points, West Virginia's bench provided a huge lift on the offensive end and the host Mountaineers stomped the Horned Frogs.

The Mountaineers (14-2, 3-1 Big 12) are



RICHARD SHIRO/AP

Clemson players and fans celebrate after the Tigers upset No. 3 Duke on Tuesday.

unbeaten in eight home games and have held 10 opponents this season to 60 points or fewer, including five straight.

TCU (12-4, 3-1) remains winless in Morgantown since joining the Big 12 in the 2012-13 season.

**No. 13 Dayton 79, VCU 65:** Obi Toppin scored 24 points on a tender ankle and led a straight run in the second half as the host Flyers pulled away, ending a streak of four straight losses to the Rams.

Dayton (15-2, 4-1 Atlantic 10) got the better of a foul-filled matchup between the league's top-scoring team and its peskiest defense. Toppin had three dunks and a three-pointer during the second-half run that broke it open.

VCU (12-5, 2-2) faded after a back-and-forth opening half that included three technical fouls. De'Riante Jenkins and Nah'Shon Hyland led VCU with 16 points apiece.

**No. 14 Villanova 79, DePaul 75:** Collin Gillespie made four straight free throws in overtime and scored 21 points, and the host Wildcats survived a scare to beat the Blue Demons for the 19th straight time.

Villanova (13-3, 4-1 Big East) trailed by 13 early and got a fight few expected from one of the perennial worst teams in the conference. DePaul's Charlie Moore, who finished with 29 points, made one free throw and intentionally missed the second with about a second left in OT, but the Blue Demons failed to score.

DePaul (12-5, 0-4) trailed by 11 points with 2:14 left in regulation. Jalen Coleman-Lands connected on a corner three with 31.5 seconds to go that made it 67-65 and Moore scored the tying basket after Villanova threw away the ball.

Gillespie steadied the Wildcats in OT and they won for the 10th time in 11 games.

**Wisconsin 55, No. 17 Maryland 54:** Brad Davidson hit a three-pointer with 11 seconds left after getting a steal and the host Badgers picked up their third straight victory against a ranked opponent.

Davidson finished with 14 points. Nate Reuvers scored 17 points and Micah Potter had 14 for Wisconsin.

Jalen Smith scored 18 and Anthony Cowan Jr. had 16 for the Terrapins (13-4, 3-3) who have lost two straight. Maryland suffered an 18-point defeat Friday at Iowa.

**No. 21 Ohio State 80, Nebraska 68:** C.J. Walker scored 18 points to help the host Buckeyes beat the Cornhuskers and snap a four-game skid.

Ohio State (12-5, 2-4 Big Ten) hadn't won since before Christmas, but it took charge early and rolled over Nebraska, whose transfer-heavy lineup is still learning to play together.

Ohio State played typically good defense and finally knocked down some shots. Guards D.J. Carton and Walker both played most of the game. Carton finished with 13 points.

**No. 23 Texas Tech 77, Kansas State 63:** Tyler Edwards scored a career-high 24 points, Davide Moretti had 14 and the visiting Red Raiders used a late push to beat the Wildcats.

Texas Tech (11-5, 2-2 Big 12) led by 17 at one point, but Kansas State rallied and led 46-45 with 13 minutes remaining. Kevin McCuller scored nine of his 10 points in the final 11:30 to help steady Texas Tech. Jahmi'us Ramsey also had 10 points.

## Briefly

## Panthers LB Kuechly retiring after 8 seasons in NFL

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carolina Panthers linebacker Luke Kuechly is retiring from the NFL after eight seasons.

The 28-year-old Kuechly made the surprising announcement Tuesday night in a video posted on the team's website. He said, "I think now is the right chance to move on."

Kuechly was selected to seven Pro Bowls and was a first-team All-Pro five times. However, he suffered three concussions during his career, which may have led to his decision.

Kuechly fought back tears at times during his announcement. He did not specifically mention concussions but referenced the ongoing toll of the game on his body.

"It makes me sad because I love playing

this game," Kuechly said. "I've played it since I was a kid. It's my favorite thing to do in the world. The memories I have from this place and this organization and being on the field with these guys, they will never go away. ... At this point, I don't know if I am able to do that anymore, and that's the part that is the most difficult."

Kuechly finishes his career with 1,092 tackles, which is the most by any player since coming out of the league in 2012 as a first-round pick of the Boston College.

On other NFL news:

■ Former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue has made the Pro Football Hall of Fame in his fifth attempt.

Tagliabue and former New York Giants general manager George Young made it to the hall in Canton, Ohio as contributors, it was announced Wednesday. The class of 10

senior candidates, three contributors and two coaches are part of the hall's celebration of the NFL's 100th season.

Ex-Dallas Cowboys safety Cliff Harris and former Cleveland receiver Mac Speedie were announced with Tagliabue.

Earlier Wednesday, another member of the Steel Curtain, safety Donnie Shell, made it, as did fellow safety Bobby Dillon and defensive tackle Alex Karras. Shell is the 10th man from the Pittsburgh dynasty of the 1970s to be elected.

Also, Duke Slater, one of the NFL's first black players, defensive standout Ed Sprinkle and NFL Films pioneer Steve Sabol were announced. So were wide receiver Harold Carmichael and offensive tackles Winston Hill and Jim Covert.

Over the weekend, the election of Bill Cowher and Jimmy Johnson was revealed.

### Donaldson signs with Twins

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Twins and 2015 AL MVP Josh Donaldson have agreed to a \$92 million, four-year contract, according to a person familiar with the deal.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Tuesday night because the deal had not been announced. The contract includes a club option for a fifth season that would bring the total value to \$100 million.

The 34-year-old third baseman returned after an injury-spoiled 2018 split between Toronto and Cleveland to bat .259 with 37 homers, 94 RBIs and a 900 OPS for Atlanta last year. He earned \$23 million on a one-year deal with the Braves, his lone season in the NL in a decade-long major league career.



## MLB

# Fallout: Cora still faces punishment from league

## FROM BACK PAGE

after Manfred suspended them for the 2020 season for their roles in the cheating scheme. Cora met Tuesday with Boston management and they issued a release saying they had "mutually agreed to part ways."

"Given the findings and the commissioner's ruling, we collectively decided that it would not be possible for Alex to effectively lead the club going forward," the team said in a statement attributed to owner John Henry, chairman Tom Werner, CEO Sam Kennedy and Cora.

The team called a news conference for Wednesday afternoon to address the scandal, which leaves it without a manager less than a month before pitchers and catchers are due to report to spring training.

Bench coach Ron Roenicke, who spent five years managing the Milwaukee Brewers, is the most experienced member of the current coaching staff; former Red Sox catcher Jarrett Vazquez has also been mentioned as a possible replacement.

In suspending Luhn and Hinch, Manfred said he was withholding Cora's punishment until completing a separate investigation of accusations the Red Sox stole signs in 2018. That investigation will continue; Cora and the Red Sox could both face additional penalties.

"We agreed today that parting ways was the best thing for the organization," Cora said in a statement released by the team. "I do not want to be a distraction to the Red Sox as they move forward."

New Mets manager and former Astros player Carlos Beltran also was implicated by Manfred in his report Monday — the only player mentioned. Manfred decided that no players would be disciplined for breaking rules prohibiting the use of electronics to steal catchers' signs in 2017 after levying

penalties against Boston and the New York Yankees.

The Mets declined comment on Beltran's status.

The Los Angeles Dodgers lost the 2017 World Series to the Astros and again in 2018 to the Red Sox.

"All clubs have been asked by Major League Baseball not to comment on today's punishment of the Houston Astros as it's inappropriate to comment on discipline imposed on another club," Los Angeles said in a statement Monday night. "The Dodgers have also been asked not to comment on any wrongdoing during the 2017 World Series and will have no further comment at this time."

A member of Boston's 2007 championship club, Cora was hired in November 2017 to take over a Red Sox team that won back-to-back AL East titles in 2016-17 but failed to advance in the postseason under John Farrell.

Cora guided the team to a franchise-record 108 regular-season victories in 2018 and its fourth World Series title in 15 years. The Red Sox beat a pair of 100-win teams in the Yankees and Astros in the AL playoffs, then defeated the Dodgers in a five-game World Series to make Cora the first Puerto Rican manager to win a championship and the fifth manager to guide a team to a title in his first season.

He was rewarded by president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski with a new contract adding an extra guaranteed season in 2021, a deal that included a club option for 2022.

Dombrowski was fired in September after the Red Sox stumbled toward an 84-78 record and missed the playoffs for the first time since 2015. He was replaced this offseason by former Tampa Bay Rays executive Chaim Bloom, who will lead the search for a new manager.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Astros manager A.J. Hinch holds the championship trophy on Nov. 1, 2017 after Houston won the World Series in seven games over the Los Angeles Dodgers. Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were fired Monday by team owner Jim Crane after being suspended for a year for stealing signs.

# There is a solution Baseball just needs to fight tech with tech

BY DAVID BRANDT  
Associated Press

## PHOENIX

If Major League Baseball really wants to stop its teams from electronically stealing signs, it might consider fighting technology with more technology.

In a sport that's increasingly driven by analytics and advancements, the majority of signs between players and coaches are still transmitted by low-tech hand signals that have been used for decades. Those hand signals are easily captured by the loads of video equipment around MLB stadiums that are used for television, replays and all kinds of stat tracking.

All that technology can be — and obviously has been — used for cheating. The Houston Astros were hit with stiff punishment on Monday after an MLB investigation found the team used electronics to steal signs during the franchise's run to the 2017 World Series title and again in the 2018 season. Manager A.J. Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for a season and then fired by Astros owner Jim Crane.

Boston manager Alex Cora was fired on Tuesday for his involvement with the Astros' scheme and a separate ongoing investigation that involves the Red Sox.

Considering those developments, it might be wise to save players and coaches from themselves.

A partial model is already in place: The NCAA's Southeastern Conference has used electronic communication between coaches and catchers during league games for the past two seasons, which allows the coach to talk strategy with the catcher through an earpiece. It's much like the NFL, where an offensive coach tells plays to a quarterback.

"I don't know why everyone isn't doing it — it's fantastic," LSU coach Paul Mainieri said. "It allows the coach to speak directly to the catcher and speeds up the game."

In the SEC's system, the catcher still has to relay signs to the pitcher the old-fashioned way with hand signals, but Mainieri said there's no reason why pitchers couldn't eventually be included in the conversation. It's more common for coaches to call pitches in college, while catchers usually handle those responsibilities in the big leagues.

MLB expects to show players some prototypes of pitcher-catcher communication devices at spring training camps this year, but there are no plans to put any of them in place.

It would be unrealistic for a big league catcher to talk with the pitcher with a batter standing right next to him. Ole Miss coach Mike Bianco said there could be ways to work around that problem, suggesting that a clicker could be employed.

Former MLB catcher Buck Martinez, who played 17 seasons, said the technology is available and today's generation of players would adapt to earpieces quickly if that's the route the sport wanted to take.

"I think most of these younger generation kids have earpieces in their ears most of the time anyway," Martinez said laughingly, referencing the ubiquitous AirPods. "It's just normal. It would just be listening to baseball instead of music."

Under MLB's current setup, the sport has tried to draw a distinct line about what's allowed and what's not when it comes to sign stealing. It's a legal and time-honored part of baseball as long as it is done with the naked eye. Using technology is prohibited.

There's a wide variety of opinion about how much technological cheating is actually happening. Arizona Diamondbacks GM Mike Hazen said in November he didn't think it was a widespread problem.

"I think MLB has done a really good job of cleaning up all of that stuff. It's been a topic for a few years," Hazen said, shortly after the news broke that the Astros were being investigated by MLB. "There's a lot of restrictions in place, there's a lot of guidance in the clubhouse, oversight, in a good way."

## ASTROS GUILTY OF ELECTRONIC SIGN STEALING

Astros players devised a system to decode signs using a center field camera and a trash can that changed during the 2017 season — the year Houston won its first World Series title.



SOURCE: MLB

AP

## NHL

# Split shifts

## Defensemen who also play as wingers show it can be done

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

Brendan Smith caught his breath for a few seconds on the bench before New York Rangers coach David Quinn called his name again.

Smith had just skated a shift as a defenseman and was needed at forward, too. The natural defenseman hopped over the boards and got back on the ice at a different position.

"The more I do it, I get more comfortable," he said.

Smith is one of a couple of throwback-style players bouncing between forward and defense this season. He and Florida's Mark Pysyk are the latest to follow the lead of Hall of Famers Red Kelly and Mark Howe and present-day Brent Burns and Dustin Byfuglien, and their experience could open the door for more multiposition players in a sport that usually defines being a center, wing or defenseman very specifically.

"It's definitely different," Pysyk said. "I think guys at this level probably could make the switch given enough time to get comfortable with their new position because everybody skates well."

Kordell Stewart earned the nickname "Slash" by playing quarterback and wide receiver in the NFL and slugger/pitcher Shohei Ohtani can star for the Los Angeles Angels in multiple ways in baseball. But specialization in hockey starts early as it does in other sports — forwards, defensemen and goalies all tend to be identified as such at a young age.

Smith as recently as Thursday shifted from his regular wing position back to defense to fill in amid injuries, and the same night, Pysyk — back for another stint at

forward — scored his third goal of the season. For one game in November, (almost) lifelong defenseman Tyler Lewington played a few shifts up front for the salary-cap strapped Washington Capitals when they could only dress 11 forwards.

"There's a lot more to a forward's game than I thought before," said Lewington, 25, who hadn't played forward since he was 10. "It's something that's not easy."

This kind of thing was more common in the 1920s and '30s, Kelly played his first 12-plus seasons in Detroit as a defenseman and the next eight-plus in Toronto as a forward, winning the Stanley Cup eight times — four at each position. Howe played his first three World Hockey Association seasons as a left winger alongside dad Gordie and brother Marty before switching to defense full-time.

Before video was more prevalent, Howe used to watch game replays late at night to figure out how to hone his game on the blue line. He made the Hall of Fame primarily for his time as a defenseman. Before and after his transition, he noticed differences like fewer scoring chances in practice as a defenseman — and more idle time on the bench as a forward biding his time for the next shift.

Now pro scouting director with the Detroit Red Wings, Howe called Smith the perfect example of a player who can adjust to the variations of playing forward and defense.

"(As a defenseman) it's more of a game of you go when you can, but you have to be responsible defensively. You have to learn to read and when to jump up in the play," Howe said. "As a forward, you're learning at key points of the game: 'When do you try to make a play?

When do you try to make a play?



KARL B. DEBLAKER/AP

**Florida's Mark Pysyk handles the puck against Carolina. In a sport that usually defines a player by one specific position, Pysyk is a rare example of a defender who also takes shifts as a forward.**

**"I think guys at this level probably could make the switch given enough time to get comfortable with their new position because everybody skates well."**

Mark Pysyk

Florida Panthers player

When is it a smart play to dump the puck in the corner? When do you definitely not want to turn a puck over? And with both (positions), you take different chances."

While Pysyk hadn't played defense since he was 6 or 7 until earlier this season, Quinn knew from recruiting Smith to Boston University that this dual role was possible. Quinn asked Smith last season to try it, and it worked so well that it has stuck, with Smith also killing penalties as a defenseman.

"You've got a guy who obviously plays forward 5-on-5 but he's been one of our better (penalty) killing defensemen," Quinn said. "It gives you a little bit of flexibility on your roster, which is always nice game in and game out."

Three-time Stanley Cup-winning coach Joel Quenneville trusts Pysyk the same way. He won the Cup in 2010 with Chicago moving Byfuglien back and forth and using the combination of his big frame, hard shot and smooth skating as an advantage.

"That versatility was a great asset to have in playoff series," Quenneville recalled. "Sometimes you could put him on a forward line to create space, I'd like to say, on power play (as a) net-front presence, but then you've got a big shot at the point. You could multitask with him in the course of the games."

The same was possible for Burns when he played forward and defense with Minnesota earlier in his career. He became a full-time defenseman before a 2011 trade to San Jose and won the Norris Trophy as the best player at that posi-

tion in 2017.

Quenneville likes having a defenseman at forward at times because they tend to think of the game more conservatively.

"They usually have that mindset of being above the puck, so they keep themselves in the play, and defensively they have that responsibility," Quenneville said. "You get to handle the puck a little bit more, but I think they're always in that position where offensively they're complementing the guys they're playing with, being either the safety guy or the extra guy that's always going to be in the right spots."

Pysyk, who said he would prefer to play defense but can do both, is still getting used to the idea that he is not always the last guy back.

"It's weird seeing a pass go past you and then chasing it from the other end," he said.

Smith, who is in his 10th NHL season, is more comfortable on defense, but thinks he could be a "slash" player if he needs to.

"The biggest adjustment would be to change your mindset of defensive to offensive and knowing where to be at the right time because there's so many moving parts," Smith said. "The hardest part is making sure that you can mentally prepare yourself for it."

Vegas Golden Knights forward Reilly Smith sees his brother playing two different positions and knows he — and many others — wouldn't be able to handle it.

"I can't skate backward, can't stop anyone," Reilly Smith said. "It takes a lot of versatility to be able to do that."

# Gallant fired by Knights

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

Gerard Gallant was abruptly fired as coach of the Vegas Golden Knights on Wednesday less than two years after leading them to the Stanley Cup Final in their first season of existence.

Peter DeBoer takes over immediately, a month after being fired by the San Jose Sharks.

General manager Kelly McCrimmon announced the stunning change the morning after a 4-2 loss to Buffalo dropped Vegas out of a playoff position in the Western Conference. The Golden Knights have lost four in a row, matching the longest point drought in their brief franchise history.

"In order for our team to reach its full potential, we determined a coaching change was necessary. Our team is capable of more than we have demonstrated this season," McCrimmon said. "In Peter DeBoer, we have a proven, experienced head coach who we believe can help us achieve our ultimate goal."

Gallant was fired less than two years after winning the Jack Adams Award as NHL coach of the year for his role in helping the Golden Knights reach the 2018 Stanley Cup Final. They also made the playoffs last season before losing in seven games in the first round to DeBoer's Sharks.

This is the seventh coaching change in the NHL this season and the fifth for performance reasons. Vegas is the third team to change coaches after facing the Sabres, a loss that didn't sit well among players.

"It's tougher, especially when you're losing to teams you know that you're better than," Golden Knights wing Mark Stone said Tuesday night. "We're a better hockey team. Just have to find ways to put the puck in the net, and we've kind of gotten stale last bunch of games."

The Golden Knights are 8-6-1 in their last 15 but are only three points out of first place in the Pacific Division. Gallant was set to coach the Pacific team at All-Star Weekend later this month after Vegas led the division at the halfway mark.

Things haven't gone well since then. The power play is 5 of 12 over the past 12 games, and the penalty kill gave up two goals to the Sabres, who are ranked 21st in the league.

"They're still doing the same type of things, whether it's unlucky or bad opportunities," Gallant said after the loss. "It's just not working right now."

DeBoer was fired by the Sharks in December amid their disappointing season. DeBoer, who had been called a "clown," is the permanent replacement with no interim designation.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

**The Rangers' Brendan Smith, left, is one of a couple of throwback-style players bouncing between wing and defense this season.**





## SPORTS

## Surprise retirement

Panthers' Kuechly calls it quits at age 28 » Sports briefs, Page 20



MLB

# Fallout

## Cora latest to be fired amid scandal

By JIMMY GOLEN  
Associated Press

BOSTON — Alex Cora has already been identified as a ringleader in an illegal system of sign stealing when he was with the Houston Astros.

The Red Sox didn't wait to see what punishment Major League Baseball might give him for possibly bringing a similar scheme with him to Boston.

Cora was fired by the team he led to the 2018 World Series title on Tuesday night, one day after baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said he was "an active participant" in the Astros' cheating when he was a bench coach in Houston.

Manfred mentioned Cora by name 11 times in a nine-page report, saying he "originated and executed" the scheme in which Houston used a center-field camera to decode catchers' signals to pitchers, then banged on a trash can to relay the signs to batters so they would know what type of pitch was coming.

The Astros fired manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow, making that announcement an hour

SEE FALLOUT ON PAGE 21

**'We agreed today that parting ways was the best thing for the organization. I do not want to be a distraction to the Red Sox as they move forward.'**

Alex Cora  
Former manager

## Inside:

- There's an electronic solution to combat sign stealing, Page 21

Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora waits for the start of Game 5 of the World Series against the Dodgers on Oct. 28, 2018 in Los Angeles. Cora was fired by the Red Sox on Tuesday, a day after baseball commissioner Rob Manfred implicated him in the sport's sign-stealing scandal.

DAVID J. PHILLIP / AP

Pens' Crosby collects four points in return

NHL, Page 23

Leonard scores 43 points in Clippers win

NBA, Page 19

